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ABSTRACT

The impact of college on women in a maximum-security prison was examined in a 3-year study of current and former inmates of New York's Bedford Hills Correctional Facility (BHCF). The data sources were as follows: (1) a review of program records; (2) one-on-one interviews of 65 inmates conducted by 15 inmates; (3) focus groups with 43 women in BHCF (including dropouts, women in adult basic education, women in college, and college leaders/mentors); (4) interviews with 20 former inmates of BHCF; (5) interviews with 6 corrections administrators and officers; (6) focus groups with and surveys of 50 educators; (7) qualitative tracking of women who did and did not attend college while at BHCF; and (8) a cost-benefit analysis of BHCF's college-bound program. The recidivism rates for women with and without college in prison were 7.7% and 29.9%, respectively. The interviews with prison officials, inmates, and faculty confirmed that college programs make the prison environment safer and more manageable. College was credited with heightening the female inmates' sense of personal responsibility and promoting successful transitions out of prison. (The racial/ethnic distribution of the inmate and former inmate samples and a 21-item annotated bibliography are appended. Eighty-four report references and 72 suggestions for further reading are listed.) (MN)

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Collaborative Research by

The Graduate Center of the City University of New York

& Women in Prison at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility

# THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE IN A MAXIMUM-SECURITY PRISON

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CHANGING MINDS: THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE
IN A MAXIMUM-SECURITY PRISON
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September 2001

# CHANGING MINDS

## The Impact of College in a Maximum-Security Prison: Effects on Women in Prison, the Prison Environment, Reincarceration Rates and Post-Release Outcomes

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To:
The BHCF Educational Center Board of Directors

6/22

I, in as much words would like to tell you how much I appreciate individually, each of your efforts in allowing me to graduate with my Associates Degree. I thought it was a long, lost dream until you all decided to play a part in my life and others. You have given me an opportunity to change and redirect my path. I would like to say thank you for everything. Your kindness will never, ever be forgotten in my life

Sincerely,
Iris Bowen
"Class of 99"


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*"The experiment is whether the children of the people — the children of the whole people — can be educated: and whether an institution of learning of the highest grade can be successfully controlled, not by the privileged few but by the privileged many."*

Horace Webster, the first President of the Free Academy, 1849

For more than a century, the state of New York has provided quality higher education to generations of poor and working class Americans. In 1847, when the New York State legislature created the Free Academy or what would become City College, its primary goal was to offer economically disadvantaged students an academic curriculum comparable to that provided to Ivy League students.[1] The founders of City College, and later the City University of New York and the State University of New York, firmly believed that affordable higher learning would foster economic opportunity and civic responsibility. They trusted that higher education would produce citizens who would actively and productively participate in the nation's democracy, thereby ensuring a stable, civilized society.

Today, New York's commitment to higher education has fallen short of the founding principles of its public university system. Spending on education in New York has endured crippling cuts over the past decades, as budget deficits and allocations for crime control and prisons grew to consume a lion's share of public money. Since 1988, the operating budgets of the state's public universities have plummeted by 29%, leading to higher tuition across the board. During the same period, the state's prison spending burgeoned by 76%. In 1994, for the first time in its history, New York State spent more public dollars on prisons than on public universities.[2] Between 1979 and 1999, per capita state spending on prisons grew 117% while per capita spending on higher education dropped 22%.[3] Advocates for higher education funding say this will only become bleaker as an economic downturn could cause states, strained by the loss of revenue, to cut budgets for college funding to pay for increasingly expensive prisons.

Despite the promise of equal access to education, black and brown communities — particularly those most isolated and disenfranchised — today are seeing more of their young people enter prisons than college. Twice as many Blacks and Hispanics are held in prison today than are attending the State University of New York. Since 1998, more Blacks have entered the prison system for drug offenses each year than have graduated from SUNY with undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degrees combined. Nationally, the numbers are equally discouraging: five times as many black men are presently in prison as in four-year colleges and universities.[4]

The growth of prisons and prison spending in New York has mirrored the national trend to control crime and incarcerate more people. As the U.S. prison population grew to historical proportions in the past three decades, the Empire State's inmate population followed, rising from 10,000 in the 1970's to 70,000 today.[5] Despite the declining crime rates, the incarceration trend has continued to spiral uncontrollably, fed by tough-on-crime attitudes and the political rhetoric of the War on Drugs. This war, and the media frenzy it fueled, has contributed to America's disproportionate preoccupation with the fear of random violence and what many believed to be the failure of the criminal justice system to punish criminals. In the name of public safety, state and national leaders have justified the priority to build more and more prisons at the expense of classrooms. They have led voters to believe that their personal safety require sacrifices in virtually every area of public spending, including education, when in fact, education has proven time and again to be the indisputable tool for crime reduction and public safety.

The distorted public priorities practiced by state and national leaders are rooted firmly in a convergence of events that began in the 1960s. As crime rates and public unrest grew significantly in that period, Republican politicians and later Democrats came to see crime as an issue they could exploit to capture the attention of American voters. Tough on crime rhetoric became an easy way to win votes. Richard Nixon first used this strategy on a national level to position himself as the law and order candidate during the civil disobedience of the Civil Rights Movement and anti-war protests of the Vietnam era. In New York, the legislature passed the Rockefeller Drug Laws in1973, promising mandatory minimum sentences for drug-related offenses and creating a model strategy for the War on Drugs. New York's law spawned a generation of harsh and fixed mandatory sentencing measures nationally, including California's "Three Strikes" and the "Truth in Sentencing" schemes adopted by many states.

In such a climate, the media has played an influential role in molding the public's perception of crime and its support for punitive criminal justice policies. The consolidation of media and the tremendous corporate pressures on media to attract viewers or sell newspapers have produced a pitched level of crime coverage that has only heightened public fears. We have all heard the saying, "If it bleeds it leads." No evening news or tabloid is complete without its share of sensational crimes and acts against humanity. Given this steady diet of mayhem, the result is a public more enthusiastic and sometimes eager to extend criminal sanctions to a broader range of anti-social behavior such as drug use and mental illness and less willing to consider the possibility of rehabilitation. In one striking example, researchers found that during the period when states increasingly passed laws to try youths as adults, television coverage of juvenile crime during that same period had increased by 473%, even though the number of juveniles charged with homicides in that time actually decreased by 32%.[6]

Buttressed by the media, proponents of tough-on-crime policies believed that such policies would ensure the public's safety while improving a criminal justice system that they perceived to be too "soft" on criminals. It didn't seem to matter that during this same period, from 1970-1998, crime rates and incarceration rates did not always coincide.[7] The result was that by 1994, when Governor George Pataki took office, New York State and much of the rest of the country, had more prisoners than existing prisons could hold. Not surprisingly, the race to punish also dictated a harsher attitude towards prisoners. By 1994, the US Congress and then the New York State Legislature had slashed federal and state funding for higher education in prison. In such a climate, higher education took a back seat to punishment.

Before the passage of the Rockefeller Drug Laws and other fixed sentencing policies, there were 10,000 people in New York prisons, 250,000 nationwide. Today, over 70,000 New Yorkers are incarcerated, 2 million nationwide.[8,9] Mandatory sentencing guidelines were meant to standardize sentencing practices and restrict discretion on the part of judges. They, instead, have offered a one-size fits-all approach to sentencing that has fed the growth of prison populations nationwide. Under the Rockefeller laws, for example, a person convicted of selling two ounces of a narcotic must receive a sentence equal to that of someone who possessed four ounces of drugs — a minimum prison term of 15 years to life. According to the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services, nearly 80% of drug offenders who received prison sentences in 1997 had never been convicted of a violent felony and almost half had never even been arrested for a violent crime.[10] Likewise, the majority of Americans entering our prison system today are non-violent offenders — 52.7% in state prisons, 73.70% in jails, and 87.6% in federal prisons.[11] Prisons in America no longer house only those charged with violent offenses; they now warehouse people who suffer from substance abuse, mental illness and poverty.

Women make up the fastest growing segment of the prison population. In New York and nationally, women have been incarcerated at nearly double the rate of men.[12] Since 1980, the population of women in prison has increased 654%.[13] As my colleague Leslie Glass suggests, and as the women in BHCF fully acknowledge, not all women prisoners are passive victims in the cycle of drugs, crime, and incarceration. Yet, it is important to note that the majority of women behind bars today are convicted of non-violent, drug-related offenses.[14] Many women are convicted as accessories to a drug crime, i.e. for carrying drugs for their male partners.

Black women in particular account for a high percentage of women incarcerated today, their numbers reflecting the disproportionate representation of Blacks and Hispanics in prisons nationwide. In New York State, Blacks and Hispanics make up over 80% of the entire prison population, and they comprise more than 90% of those committed for drug offenses.[15] Nationwide, 50 percent of all current U.S. prison inmates are African American, and another 17 percent are Hispanic.[16] In contrast, African Americans make up 12.3% of the US population and Hispanics 12.8%.[17] According to the Sentencing Project, one in three young black men between the ages of 20-29 are under some form of criminal justice supervision.[18]

To a great extent, the current level of incarceration is sustained by cycling people in and out of prison. Many inmates simply languish in prison, lacking quality services such as education, employment training, and drug treatment. Most are released to their communities without transitional support to acquire jobs, housing, health care and education. Recidivism and re-arrest rates are at an all time high. In 1998, New York State released 27,993 men and women from prison.[19] The recidivism rate for that same year was 43.8%.[20] Nationally, the figures are worse. Sixty-two percent of those released from state prisons will be re-arrested within three years. Forty percent will repeat the cycle, ending up behind bars again, only to be released... again.

Most people who end up in prison have received very little formal education; very few have a college degree — with some exceptions at BHCF. It would be inaccurate to suggest that low educational attainment causes higher levels of criminal behavior or incarceration. But a disproportionate number of the incarcerated are undereducated. Recidivism studies have demonstrated repeatedly — though perhaps not as eloquently as this study — that those who receive a college education while in prison fare better when they rejoin society than those who do not. They are less likely to re-offend, more likely to find employment, and to become active and productive members of our communities. Some become leaders — professors, CEO's, and even elected officials.

*Far from a waste of taxpayers' dollars, higher education in prison is an investment in our public safety. It enables those who have been cast off to rejoin us as responsible neighbors and productive co-workers, giving us all a chance to live in a more stable, civilized society. By supporting college education in prison we are reminded of the cause championed by the founders of New York's public universities long ago: higher education can open minds. In prison, it can change lives.*

Helena Huang
Open Society Institute

*This ground-breaking study began in an inmate meeting at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility three years ago. I went to Bedford as a funder on a site visit: to meet face-to-face some of the women who wanted college reintroduced to Bedford and to find out why education was so important to them. When I entered the facility, I had some idea of the demographics at Bedford and believed that I would be meeting with women who'd been convicted and received long sentences for non-violent, drug-related crimes. In short, I thought I would be meeting some of the "innocents" caught in our deadly system.*

*There is much strong feeling about the perpetrators of crime in our society. Literature and the news tell us everything we think we need to know. We've all read books and articles describing "the criminal mind." We've seen unrepentant killers on TV many times. They scare us, and rightly so. From the information the general public has received on the subject, it's easy to accept the idea that all people who commit crimes are formed from the same mold, are unreachable, and therefore deserve to be isolated from every human comfort and positive resource. For those who have never met or talked to or cared about a person who has committed any kind of crime, much less a violent one, it is not difficult to accept the proliferation of maximum-security prisons with few to zero programs for preparing those on the inside for a different kind of life when they are released. It's easy to be a skeptic about the possibility for profound change occurring in the minds and hearts of people who are serving time, and at the same time, reading, writing, studying and discussing new ideas.*

*Had I been told three years ago that I would be sitting virtually alone in a room with a dozen women who had been convicted of committing violent crimes, I would have been fearful and not so eager to question them closely about the circumstances of their lives. Uninformed, however, I plunged ahead. I asked the group assembled in the Learning Center what their level of education was when they came in, how long their sentences were, and what the impact of college had been on them and their families.*

*Knowing no better, I further asked them what they had done to merit such severe sentences. Bad form in the extreme. The room crackled with tension as one by one the women answered a stranger's intimate and probing questions about their crimes, their families and children on the outside, and their hopes for the future. When the circle was completed and we had come around to me, they were not shy about turning the tables. They asked me just what I was doing there, asking these questions, and what I hoped to accomplish. This document is what I hoped to accomplish.*

*Educators everywhere know a simple truth: learning brings about transformations of many kinds. It helps to equip people for a better life wherever that life may be led. With this study on the impact of education behind bars, the women at Bedford have given legislators, judges, the media, and the general public real data to demonstrate that education makes a difference, and all of society benefits by each new person who receives it.*

*Leslie Glass*
Leslie Glass Foundation

In 1994, over 350 college programs in prisons were shut down throughout the nation. In that year, President Clinton signed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act into law, which included a provision that denied incarcerated men and women access to Pell Grants. This federal tuition assistance program, previously available to *all* low-income persons, supported most college-in-prison programs. New York State, like most other states, soon thereafter withdrew its financial support for college in prisons as well, and effectively ended all higher education for men and women in prison across the state. At one facility, the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility (BHCF), a maximum-security prison for women located in Westchester County, New York State, college-in-prison was reintroduced in 1997 by a consortium of private colleges and universities, involved community members, the Superintendent and a dedicated Inmate Committee.

*Changing Minds* reports empirically on the effects of that college program on its students and the prison environment. The analysis focuses on the impact of college on women while inside prison; the effects of college on the prison environment; the effects of college on other inmates; the effects of a mother's college experience on her children and the long term effects of college on the economic, social and civic engagements of women once released from prison. Given the precarious state of higher education within prison facilities, it is important to document the consequences of current public policy that does not support college in prison and to evaluate the costs and benefits of a college program broadly available to prisoners within a maximum-security facility.[1] [2]

At the moment, neither the Federal government nor any State governments will pay for higher education in prison, with the exception of some recent funding for youthful offenders.[3] The subject of this study, the College Bound program at BHCF, is a fully volunteer effort, initiated and sustained through the generosity and commitments of a set of private colleges and universities, the prison administration, community volunteers and inmate vision and energy. No public dollars support this project. A volunteer effort is powerful, but ultimately vulnerable. In the midst of national conversations about prison reform, education in prison and transitions out of prison, this report reintroduces the debate about college-in-prison to the public agenda.[4]



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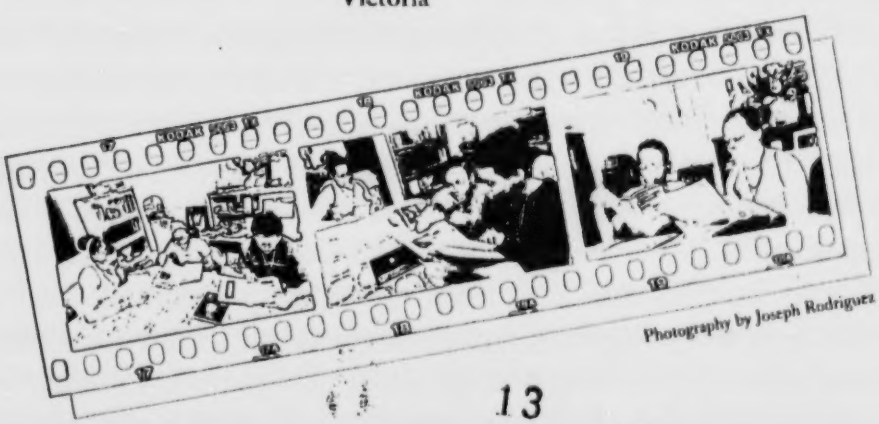
*"When I was at Bedford, especially in the college program, I learned about the importance of giving back. I had a lot of time inside to think about what I had done and the many people who paid a price for my behavior. I decided that I had to commit myself to helping others, my children and other people who are going through hard times. Working at Miracles Can Happen, going to school and hanging out with my kids — even fighting over homework — I know what I have to do. It isn't always easy. You can't just pop back into your life or your kids' lives. You've changed and so have they. But having the chance to find our way has been — well, I have never done anything so rewarding."*

Victoria



Photography by Joseph Rodriguez

**"We understand the public's anger about crime and realize that prison is first and foremost a punishment for crime. But we believe that when we are able to work and earn a higher education degree while in prison, we are empowered to truly pay our debts to society by working toward repairing some of what has been broken... It is for all these reasons, and in the name of hope and redemption, that we ask you to help us rebuild a college program here at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility."**

**The Inmate Committee, 1996**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

A broad based multi-method research design was undertaken to document the impact of college within prison on women, the prison environment and women post-release. Three conclusions, with national implications, organize this report.

**1. College-in-Prison Reduces Reincarceration Rates and Saves Taxpayer Money.**

A cost/benefit analysis demonstrates that it is fiscally far more efficient to provide access to higher education for inmates than to incur the inflated rates of reincarceration and diminished employability likely to result from no access to higher education. A New York State Department Of Correctional Services study commissioned for this project tracked 274 women who attended college while in prison and compared them to 2,031 women who did not attend college while in prison. Women who attended college while in prison were significantly less likely to be reincarcerated (7.7%) than those who did not attend college while in prison (29.9%).[25]

**2. College-in-Prison Enables Positive Management of the Prison Environment.**

Interviews with prison administrators, corrections officers, women in prison, and college faculty confirm that the presence of a college program alters the prison environment by rendering it safer, more manageable and with fewer disciplinary incidents.

**3. College-in-Prison Transforms the Lives of Students and their Children and Promotes Lasting Transitions Out of Prison.**

Reduced reincarceration rates occur because involvement in college provides women in prison with skills, knowledge and healthier social networks necessary for successful transitions out of prison.

*Changing Minds* reveals the extraordinary personal, social and fiscal costs that all Americans pay today for *not* educating prisoners. This study offers national and local policymakers and activists a new policy direction that creates safer communities, reduces reincarceration rates, helps prisoners, their families and the prison environment.[26]

| EDUCATION STATUS | RETURN TYPE | NUMBER | 36-MONTH REINCARCERATION RATE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **INMATES WITHOUT COLLEGE** (N=2,031) | NO RETURN TO NYSDOCS | 1423 | 70.1% |
| | **RETURNED TO NYSDOCS** | **608** | **29.9%** |
| | TOTAL | 2031 | |
| **INMATES WHO PARTICIPATED IN COLLEGE-IN-PRISON** (N=274) | NO RETURN TO NYSDOCS | 253 | 92.3% |
| | **RETURNED TO NYSDOCS** | **21** | **7.7%** |
| | TOTAL | 274 | |



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# COLLEGE EDUCATION IN PRISON

Most women and men in our nation's jails and prisons come from economically depressed African American and Latino communities with failing urban schools.[27] In New York State, as of January 1, 2000, there were 73,826 people in New York State Prisons, up from 12,500 in 1973 and 28,500 in 1983.[28] The state prison population is disproportionately (84%) African American and Hispanic and a full 65% of the total population are from New York City — almost all from poor communities of color.[29,30] Turning to education, approximately two-thirds of the men and women in New York State prisons have neither high school diploma nor a GED. This figure jumps to 90% in New York City jails. Between 50% and 70% of the City's adult inmate population read below the sixth grade level in English.[31]

The women at BHCF reflect national and state trends. A full 51% of the women at BHCF enter with neither a high school diploma nor a GED, most lived in poor neighborhoods of New York City prior to arrest and over 80% are African American or Latina.[32] While our country may waffle on whether or not we believe prisoners are entitled to higher education, we are consistent with respect to who ends up in prison: disproportionately those who have never received adequate education. It is no small irony, then, that those most often denied quality education prior to their involvement with prison are also those most likely to serve time in prisons and jails.

Understanding the link between educational inequities and incarceration, policymakers from the 1870 American Correctional Association Congress endorsed a provision for education within prison.[33] In 1970, one hundred years after their declaration was written, sections 136 and 137 of the Corrections Law in the State of New York were passed, requiring the Department of Correctional Services to assess a prisoner's "educational and vocational needs" and "provide each inmate with a program of education which seems most likely to further the process of socialization and rehabilitation, the objective being to return these inmates to society with a more wholesome attitude toward living, with a desire to conduct themselves as good citizens, and with the skills and knowledge which will give them a reasonable chance to maintain themselves and their dependents through honest labor."

Nationally, federal support for higher education in prison materialized in the form of allowing women and men in prison eligibility for Pell grants, the non-competitive needs-based federal college funds available to all qualifying low-income students. In New York State, Pell grants were supplemented with Tap grants in order to subsidize college-in-prison programs. From 1970 through 1994, the federal and New York State governments were true to their commitments to support prison-based higher education.

In 1994, under a provision of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, Congress eliminated inmate eligibility for Pell Grants. Allowing inmate access to Pell Grants was viewed as taking money away from law-abiding citizens, despite the fact that inmate education accounted for 1/10 of 1% of the Pell Grants' annual budget.[34] At the time that federal support was removed,

extensive research demonstrated that recidivism rates decline significantly with higher education.[35] Despite the evidence, by 1995, all but eight of the 350 college programs in prisons were closed nationwide. As public funds for college education in all New York State prisons were eliminated, a successful college program at BHCF, run by Mercy College from 1984 through 1994, closed its doors. Given the extraordinarily low levels of educational achievement with which most enter prison, this loss was not only educationally consequential but also, according to reports from women and corrections officers at BHCF, profound in terms of morale and discipline.

In June of 1995, the last graduation took place. During the following weeks, the women who had staffed the Learning Center, who had received their bachelor's and master's degrees and who had acted as role models, packed books, put computers in boxes, took posters off walls and turned their learning center into an empty shell. A feeling of despair settled over the prison as women experienced a loss of hope about their own futures and the futures of younger women coming into the prison.

Community members and educational leaders began to gather to try to imagine how they could restore college-in-prison at BHCF. In March of 1996, seven women in BHCF asked to meet with Superintendent Elaine Lord and the Deputy Superintendent of Programs about the possible restoration of the college program. Shortly thereafter, the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent, the Inmate Committee and a local community leader, former New York State Deputy Commissioner for Aging, Thea Jackson, convened to explore the possibility of creating a new, privately funded college program. Response from citizen groups across Westchester and New York City was immediate and positive. A strong alliance emerged between three communities: the *prison community* including administration, staff and inmates; *the Westchester and metropolitan New York City community*, including hundreds of citizens committed to the return of college and responsible for equipping the Learning Center with staff, desks, files, computers and books, and the *academic community*, led by President Regina Peruggi of Marymount Manhattan College, serving as the degree granting institution.

Over the next few months, a Task Force was established consisting of community members from the Westchester area; local government officials; local clergy and church members; professors, presidents and administrators from local colleges and universities; administrators from BHCF, and inmates from the Inmate Advisory Committee. It was at this point that the concept of a "consortium of colleges" was realized. If one college would offer the degree, then many colleges could work together to donate courses. The Superintendent, the inmates and community members generated Statements of Commitment. By Spring of 1997, a BA in sociology program was underway in the facility.

**Participating members of the College Consortium at BHCF as of Spring 2001:**
Bank Street College of Education, Barnard College, Berkeley College, Fordham University, Manhattanville College, Marymount Tarrytown, Mercy College, New York University, Pace University, Sarah Lawrence College, SUNY New Paltz Foundation, Columbia University and Teachers College, Columbia University all contribute faculty, resources, and support of varied forms. Marymount Manhattan College grants the degree.

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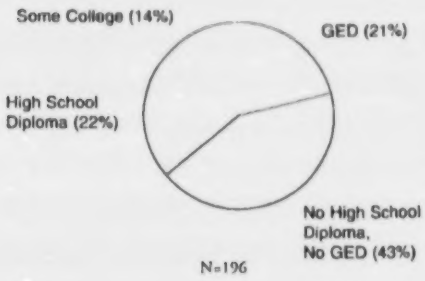
# THE WOMEN AT BHCF: WHO'S IN COLLEGE?

Located in the hills of Westchester County, BHCF, functions as the maximum-security correctional facility for women in New York State and as the reception center for all women entering the state system. Women in the general population number approximately 650 and serve an average minimum sentence of 8 1/3 years, with close to 200 women serving far more. Over 75% of the women are mothers, most with children under the age of eighteen. Seventy-eight percent of the women at BHCF are from New York City and its suburban areas. They range in age from 16 to 75, with 52% African American, 29% Latina, 16% White and the remainder Native or Asian American. Substantial numbers of the women at BHCF report long histories of child sexual abuse,[36] 75% have histories with drug and/or alcohol abuse.[37] Many were incarcerated as juveniles.[38] Twenty five percent have previously attempted suicide and over 50% have a history and/or carry a diagnosis of mental illness.[39] That said, the women at BHCF mirror the men and women of the broader national prison population.[40]

The women who have attended college at BHCF, Spring 1997 to Spring 2000, for the most part, came to prison with histories of academic failure. Upon entering the facility, 43% held neither high school diploma nor GED; 21% had a GED; 22% had a high school diploma and 14% had some college credits.

**Figure 1.** Level of Education Prior to Arriving at BHCF

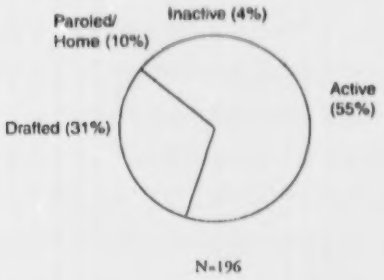



Nationally, adults in the U.S. are significantly more educated than these women. According to the U.S. Department of Education, only 12% of 25-29 year old adults have neither a high school diploma nor an equivalency certificate, 88% have a high school diploma or GED, 66% have accumulated some college credits and 31% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.[41]

Since the reestablishment of a college program in the Spring semester of 1997, through to Spring 2000, a total of 196 women at BHCF have become college students (defined as a student who has completed at least 1 semester of college classes). Fifteen have earned Associate's degrees and eight have earned Bachelor's degrees.

As of Spring 2000, 55% (108) of the original cohort remain active students. Thirty-one percent (62) interrupted their studies because they were drafted (sent to other facilities); ten percent (19) were paroled. With a strikingly low drop out rate, only 4% of the students are currently inactive, operationalized as "once enrolled for at least a semester but not registered for classes within the last three semesters."

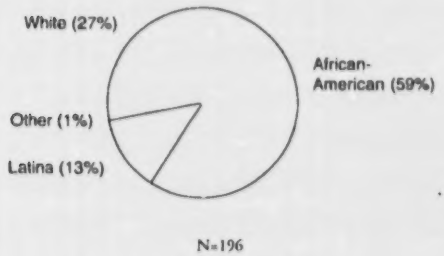
**Figure 2.** Students' Enrollment Status as of Spring 2000*




* This chart includes all students enrolled in the college program, Fall 1997-Spring 2000.

At least 16% of the women who have been part of the College Bound program started their college education in the original Mercy college program. Thirteen of the first 23 college degrees (AA's and BA's together) awarded by the College Bound program were awarded to former Mercy students.

**Figure 3.** Racial and Ethnic Distribution of All Women Ever Enrolled in the College Program at BHCF




Interestingly, the very groups of women who are not well served by public education on the outside — young adults of poverty, disproportionately African American and Latina — are the very women, age 17 to 58, who are now pursuing rigorous college education behind bars at BHCF.[42] African Americans represent 59% of the college students at BHCF, Whites 27%, Latinas 13% and "other" 1%.

Pre-college is an essential feature of the College Bound Program.[43] Women who have neither a high school diploma nor a GED upon arriving at BHCF rely heavily on Pre-college preparation to gain entry into the college. At least 64% (126) of these college students, at one point or another, participated in pre-college classes to improve their math, reading and/or writing skills in English. Often women who pass the English requirement will continue to take pre-college math and college classes simultaneously, until they pass the math requirement.

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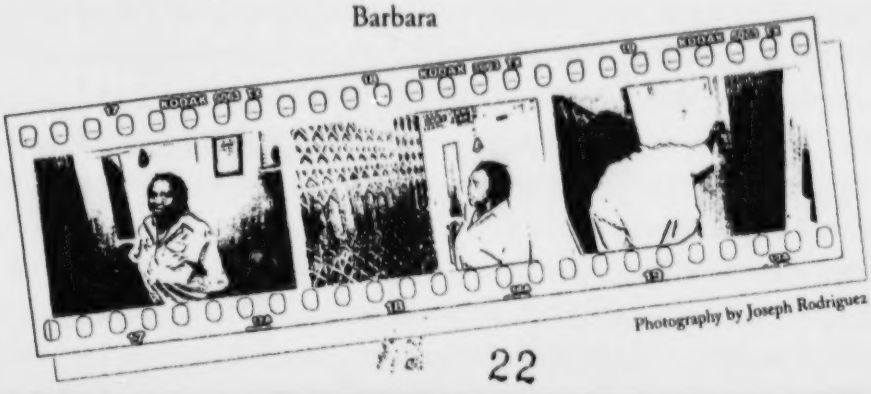
*"I run two elevators in a building on the Upper West Side. Being in such a tight space can be hard. Sometimes I get flash backs, and feel like I'm right back in prison. At least now, though, I get to push the buttons — I decide when the doors open and close. I work during the day and go to City College at night. Being in college taught me about perseverance, I learned I can do what I put my mind to... I didn't know that before college. I know I have to push myself hard, I mean real hard, but now I know I can do it. I have to do it. College has been a turning point for me. It's given me the stamina I need to keep going. I have come a long way and I can't stop now. Not until I graduate, get my MSW, get out of this elevator and find a job where I can work with troubled teens, like the kind I was. That's where it's at for me, I'm determined, and that's how I want to give back."*

Barbara



Photography by Joseph Rodriguez

*"We, members and supporters of the College Bound Task Force, come from diverse communities throughout the metropolitan and Westchester area.*

*The primary needs of our community are for public safety, less crime and less cost... The potential national net savings from college programs in prison have been calculated to be hundreds of millions of dollars per year. Without programs of assistance like College Bound, it is difficult for the women to escape from the cycle of poverty, despair and crime that brought them to prison. More disturbing is the likelihood that their children will continue this destructive pattern if unchecked.*

*Time spent in prison can be used for rehabilitation as well as punishment. The privately funded College Bound program offers the opportunity for redirection through education. For the women, it is the key to self-esteem, social responsibility and the best chance of making a successful return to their communities. For our communities, it is an offer of renewed life."*

*The Citizens Task Force for the College Bound Program, 1996*

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# RESEARCH DESIGN

Once college was reestablished in the facility, the Leslie Glass Foundation offered to fund a research project documenting the impact of college on the prison community. Michelle Fine, Professor of Social/Personality Psychology at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, agreed to become the Principal Investigator of the Project and hired a team of graduate students to help conduct the study: Melissa Rivera (Harvard), Rosemarie A. Roberts (Graduate Center), María Elena Torre (Graduate Center) and Debora Upegui (Graduate Center). It was determined early in the design phase that the validity of the project would be strengthened with inmate researchers on the research team.[44] The Superintendent was consulted and agreed to the design after the New York State Department of Correctional Services provided official approval. A team of inmate researchers joined the research: Kathy Boudin, Iris Bowen,[45] Judith Clark, Aisha Elliot,[46] Donna Hylton, Migdalia Martinez,[47] Pamela Smart and "Missy" (preferred name). In 1999, Research Specialist III E. Michele Staley of the New York State Department of Correctional Services (NYSDOCS) joined the research effort by conducting a longitudinal analysis of post-release reincarceration data.

The research was designed to answer four questions:

**1. What are the fiscal costs and benefits of *providing* college to women in prison, and what are the fiscal costs and benefits of *withholding* college from women in prison?**
Outcomes include: financial costs of provision of college and calculations for reincarceration rates with and without college.

**2. What is the impact of college-in-prison on the safety and management of the prison environment?**
Outcomes include: prison disciplinary environment, prison climate, corrections officers' views of and experiences with college and faculty views of the college program.

**3. What are the personal and social effects of college-in-prison on students and their children?**
Outcomes include: academic, social and psychological effects including academic achievement and perseverance; sense of responsibility for past and future; personal transformation and civic engagement in prison and beyond.

**4. What is the impact of the college experience on the transition home from prison?**
Outcomes include: economic well being; health; civic participation; continued pursuit of higher education; relations with family, children and friends; reincarceration rates.

# METHODS

Conducted over the course of three years, the research design required a quantitative analysis to assess the extent to which college affected reincarceration rates (conducted by the New York State Department of Correctional Services) and thereby affected the tax burden imposed on citizens of New York State for prisons (conducted in part by Former Commissioner of the New York City Department of Corrections, Commissioner of Probation and Deputy Director, NYC Office of Management and Budget, Michael Jacobson). A qualitative analysis was undertaken to determine the psychosocial effects of college on the women, the prison environment, the children of students and post-release transitions (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Research Questions, Methods, Sample and Outcomes

| RESEARCH QUESTIONS | METHOD | SAMPLE* | OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF PROVIDING/WITHHOLDING COLLEGE FROM INMATES? | 1. REINCARCERATION ANALYSIS | N=274 WOMEN IN COLLEGE<br>N=2,031 WOMEN NOT IN COLLEGE | • COSTS OF IMPRISONMENT<br>• COSTS OF COLLEGE EDUCATION<br>• COSTS OF REINCARCERATION |
| | 2. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS | | |
| 2. WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE-IN-PRISON ON THE SAFETY AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT? | 3. SURVEYS OF FACULTY | N=33 | • CHANGES IN PRISON DISCIPLINARY ENVIRONMENT<br>• PRISON CLIMATE<br>• CORRECTION OFFICERS' VIEWS OF AND EXPERIENCES WITH COLLEGE-IN-PRISON<br>• ATTITUDES OF WOMEN NOT IN THE COLLEGE PROGRAM ABOUT COLLEGE<br>• FACULTY VIEWS OF COLLEGE PROGRAM |
| | 4. INTERVIEWS WITH CORRECTIONS OFFICERS AND ADMINISTRATORS | N=6 | |
| 3. WHAT ARE THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF COLLEGE-IN-PRISON ON STUDENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN? | 5. ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY INMATE-RESEARCHERS | N=65 | • ACADEMIC PERSISTENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT<br>• PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION<br>• EXPRESSION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR CRIME AND FOR FUTURE DECISIONS<br>• REFLECTION ON CHOICES MADE IN THE PAST AND DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN THE FUTURE<br>• CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN PRISON AND OUTSIDE |
| | 6. FOCUS GROUPS: WITH INMATES, CHILDREN, UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS AND FACULTY | FOCUS GROUPS:<br>N=43 (INMATES)<br>N=20 (FACULTY)<br>N=9 (CHILDREN)<br>N=7 (PRESIDENTS) | |
| 4. WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE ON THE TRANSITION HOME FROM PRISON? | 7. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH FORMER INMATES | N=20 | • REINCARCERATION RATES<br>• ECONOMIC WELL-BEING<br>• HEALTH<br>• CIVIC PARTICIPATION<br>• PERSISTENCE IN PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION POST-RELEASE<br>• RELATIONS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS |
| | 8. STUDENT NARRATIVES | N=18 | |
| | 9. REINCARCERATION ANALYSIS OF FORMER INMATES WHO ATTENDED COLLEGE WHILE IN PRISON | N=274 COLLEGE STUDENTS<br>N=2,031 WOMEN NOT IN COLLEGE | |

* Some women participated in more than one data source.

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The methods include:

I. Archival analysis reviewing the records of the college program since inception (1997), tracking rates of persistence, women drafted (transferred to other prisons mid-sentence), drop out rates, racial and ethnic distribution, percent in pre-college and college courses.

II. Inmate initiated research on the impact of college, which consisted of one-on-one interviews of four to five women each by 15 inmates (N=65 interviews by 15 inmates).

III. Focus group interviews with women at BHCF, selected on the basis of the women's status in the program: drop outs; ABE/GED students; pre-college students; first-time college students; adolescent children of women in college; college leaders/ mentors; women in the ESL class (N=43). See Appendix A for racial and ethnic breakdown of sample.

IV. Individual interviews with women who were in college at BHCF, now released from prison (N=20). Each interview was conducted at the Graduate Center, City University, and lasted anywhere from one to three hours. Women were compensated $50 for participating in the interview.

V. Interviews with Corrections Administrators and Officers In order to understand the impact of the college program on the prison environment, interviews were conducted with administrators and corrections officers (N=6). Each interview lasted between 20 and 40 minutes.

VI. Focus group interviews and surveys of educators In order to document the impact of the college program on educators and college communities, a focus group with college faculty (N=20) was conducted by the research team in 1999. A survey was distributed to faculty in the Spring 2000 semester (N=33). Two group discussions were held with the Presidents of the Consortium universities (7 Presidents or designees).[48]

VII. Quantitative tracking of women who attended college while in prison and a comparison group of women who did not attend college while in prison. Two hundred and seventy four women who participated in the Mercy College program at BHCF and a comparison group of 2,031 women who did not attend college during the same period of time were tracked statistically to document the rates of reincarceration for: women who did not attend college, women who attended some classes but received no degree, women who earned an Associate's degree and women who earned a Bachelor's degree. This analysis was conducted by E. Michele Staley of the New York State Department of Correctional Services. [49]

VIII. Cost/Benefit Analysis of the College Bound Program relying upon data from 2000 — 2001. This analysis was conducted, in part, by Professor and Former Commissioner of the New York City Department of Corrections, Michael Jacobson.[50]

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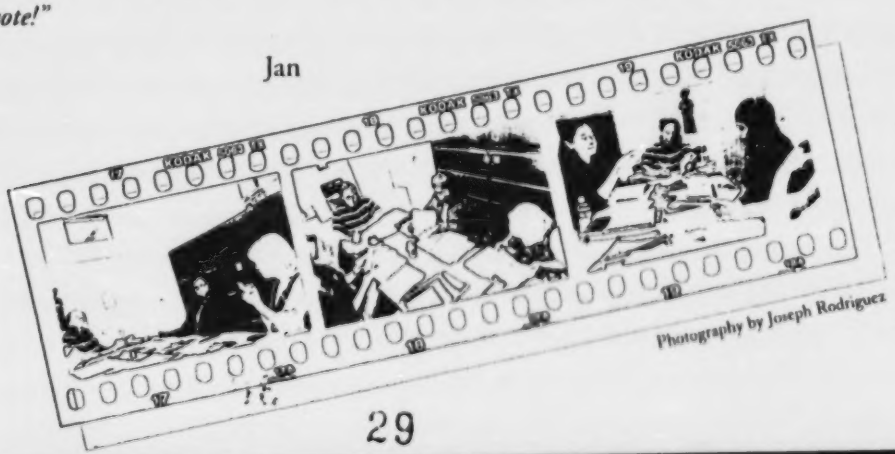
*"College and the poetry and writing I was able to produce during the 12 years I spent at BHCF, helped me imagine and create worlds that were unreachable from inside. College gave me the tools to survive economically, socially and psychologically. Today, I educate women, I work, I have a desk, a computer, a life... but once a prisoner... it's a life-long sentence, even on the outside. The punishment is never really over. Even for someone like me. I may have privileges some other women don't — remember, in prison you don't get to make decisions for yourself, so you forget how to do that; in prison... you don't have freedom. Then you get out — Welcome to America. Only now you can't even vote!"*

Jan



Photography by Joseph Rodriguez

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT, COLLEGE BOUND COLLABORATION

*"Higher education can be a critical factor in a woman's ability to help her keep her family intact. It opens the doors to viable alternatives to cycles of criminal behavior and further incarceration. Within the prison, it can be a positive tool motivating women to change. There are no 'good' prisons; some are simply more humane than others. Small changes can make large differences. It is in our hands to stop the cycle."*

*Superintendent Elaine Lord, 1996*

# RESULTS

The results of the research are presented in four sections:

**Section I. Crime, Taxes and Reincarceration Rates**
A cost benefit analysis conducted to determine the reincarceration rates for inmates with and without college over a 36 month period, and to estimate, per 100 inmates, the costs over time of educating and not educating inmates while in prison.

**Section II. College as a Positive Management Tool in Prison**
Implications of a college program for discipline and management of the prison.

**Section III. Personal and Social Transformations within Students and their Children**
Documentation of shifts in women's sense of personal and social responsibility and the impact of college on inmates' children and inmates' transitions out of prison.

**Section IV. Lasting Transitions Out of Prison**
Analysis of women's economic, social, and civic engagements post-release.

## SECTION I. THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE ON CRIME, TAXES AND REINCARCERATION RATES

### Reincarceration Rates for Inmates with and without College-in-Prison

Evidence on the impact of higher education in reducing rates of reincarceration, and therefore reducing further crime, is remarkably consistent.[51] Indeed, a national review of 20 empirical studies reveals that higher education in prison dramatically reduces reincarceration rates for both men and women (see Appendix B).[52] Quality education prior to, during and after prison has enormous benefits for individuals, families, and communities.

In 1991, the New York State Department of Correctional Services (NYSDOCS) conducted the Analyses of Return Rate Study and concluded that, *"Inmate College Program participants in 1986-1987 who had earned a degree were found to return at a significantly lower rate than participants who did not earn a degree."*[53] Six years later, the Center on Crime, Communities and Culture of the Open Society Institute published a comprehensive literature review on education and prison in which they concluded: *"Programmatic efforts to reduce recidivism have ranged from boot camps and shock incarceration facilities to prison-based education efforts. The effectiveness of these programs varies, but research shows that prison-based education and literacy programs are much more effective at lowering recidivism rates than either boot camps or shock incarceration."*[54]

In order to investigate the question of reincarceration for the BHCF College Bound program, the research team requested from the New York State Department of Correctional Services (NYDOCS) a replication of the 1991 longitudinal analysis to determine the extent to which women in the Mercy College program were returned to custody within 36 months. E. Michele Staley, NYSDOCS Program Research Specialist III, undertook a longitudinal analysis of the reincarceration rates for the women at BHCF who had participated in the Mercy College program. Using the standard NYSDOCS measure of 36 months, out of the 274 women tracked longitudinally, 21 college participants returned to custody. *Women who participated in college while in prison had a 7.7% return-to-custody rate. In contrast, an analysis tracking all 2,031 female offenders released between 1985 and 1995 revealed a*

*29.9% return-to-custody rate, within 36 months* (see Table 2). Women without college-in-prison are almost four times more likely to be returned to custody than women who participated in college while in prison. Women without college-in-prison are twice as likely to be rearrested for a "New Term Commitment" (a new crime) than women with any college while in prison. Further, women without college-in-prison are 18 times more likely to violate parole than women with any college. This is particularly significant given that 92% of the "with college" sample were convicted of violent felonies (see Table 3). **In other words, college-in-prison reduces the amount of post-release crime and even more significantly heightens responsible compliance with parole expectations.**

**Table 2.** Return-to-Custody Rates within 36 Months of Release. (All College Participants Released from BHCF: 1985-1999. Returns Examined Through December 31,1999.)[55]

| DEGREE TYPE | RETURN TYPE | NUMBER | PERCENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **INMATES WITHOUT COLLEGE (N=2,031)** | NO RETURN TO NYSDOCS | 1423 | 70.1% |
| | **RETURNED TO NYSDOCS** | **608** | **29.9%** |
| | NEW TERM COMMITMENT | 247 | 12.2% |
| | RETURN PAROLE VIOLATOR | 361 | 17.7% |
| | TOTAL | 2031 | 100.0% |
| **INMATES WITH COLLEGE-IN-PRISON (N=274)** | NO RETURN TO NYSDOCS | 253 | 92.3% |
| | **RETURNED TO NYSDOCS** | **21** | **7.7%** |
| | NEW TERM COMMITMENT | 18 | 6.6% |
| | RETURN PAROLE VIOLATOR | 3 | 1.1% |
| | TOTAL | 274 | 100.0% |
| **CREDITS ONLY** (NO DEGREE) | NO RETURN TO NYSDOCS | 127 | 91.4% |
| | **RETURNED TO NYSDOCS** | **12** | **8.6%** |
| | TOTAL | 139 | 100.0% |
| **COLLEGE CERTIFICATE** | NO RETURN TO NYSDOCS | 16 | 100.0% |
| | **RETURNED TO NYSDOCS** | **0** | **0.0%** |
| | TOTAL | 16 | 100.0% |
| **ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE** | NO RETURN TO NYSDOCS | 50 | 94.3% |
| | **RETURNED TO NYSDOCS** | **3** | **5.7%** |
| | TOTAL | 53 | 100.00% |
| **BACHELOR'S DEGREE** | NO RETURN TO NYSDOCS | 59 | 90.8% |
| | **RETURNED TO NYSDOCS** | **6** | **9.2%** |
| | TOTAL | 65 | 100.0% |
| **MASTER'S DEGREE** | NO RETURN TO NYSDOCS | 1 | 100.0% |
| | **RETURNED TO NYSDOCS** | **0** | **0.0%** |
| | TOTAL | 1 | 100.00% |

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**Table 3:** Crime Type by Female Sample

| COMMITMENT OFFENSE TYPE | FEMALE RELEASE GROUPS | |
|---|---|---|
| | BEDFORD COLLEGE SAMPLE* | COMPARISON GROUP** |
| VIOLENT FELONY | 92.0% | 21.2% |
| OTHER COERCIVE OFFENSE | 2.6% | 4.6% |
| DRUG OFFENSE | 4.0% | 58.7% |
| PROPERTY & OTHER OFFENSES | 0.7% | 14.2% |
| YOUTHFUL OFFENDER | 0.0% | 1.4% |
| UNKNOWN | 0.7% | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| 3-YEAR RETURN TO CUSTODY RATE | 7.7% | 29.9% |

* This group is composed of females released from DOCS between 1985 and 1998 who participated in the Mercy College Program at Bedford Hills. (N=274)

** This group is composed of females released from DOCS (to parole supervision or at maximum expiration of sentence) between 1985 and 1995.

These data confirm earlier studies: it is efficient social policy to offer inmates quality higher education within prison.[56] As the remainder of this text will testify, college enables women in prison to experience personal growth and refine a sense of personal and social responsibility; college has become a "positive management tool" for prison administrators and staff, and college-in-prison appears to be a significant feature of successful transitions out of prison.

As former Attorney General Janet Reno testified, commenting on the women and men released from prison every year: *"In the year 2000, 585,000 are anticipated to return [from prison] to communities... They come into prison with rage, with a sense that they had been treated unfairly. They come into prison as dropouts or illiterate. They come into prison without life skills, without a job or an anticipated job. They come with so little chance of getting off on the right foot, unless we do it the right way... is it any surprise that nationwide two-thirds are rearrested?"*

**Tax Savings: A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Providing vs. Withholding College-in-Prison**

Policymakers, community activists, journalists and everyday citizens throughout New York are beginning to challenge the wisdom of the cumulative tax burden imposed on citizens because the government denies prisoners access to college and other support services. Fox Butterfield argues in the New York Times that the "revolving door parole policy" is worsened by the absence of developmental programs within prison facilities.[57] The Open Society Institute's (OSI) Center for Crime, Communities and Culture has reported that because an estimated 97% of adult felony inmates are released eventually back into local communities and because recidivism rates now average between 40-60%, over the long term, the expense of providing higher education to women and men in prison is minimal relative to the costs of re-arrests, additional crime and re-imprisonment.[58]

*"Given the relatively small baseline of funding for the College Bound program, the 'bang for the buck' in terms of the dramatic post-release outcomes is quite significant."*
Michael Jacobson
Professor,
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Former Commissioner of the New York City Department of Corrections, 1995-98

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The OSI 1997 report Education as Crime Prevention: Providing Education to Prisoners argues: *"New York State estimates that it costs $2,500 per year per individual to provide higher education in a correctional facility. In contrast the average cost of incarcerating an adult inmate per year is $25,000. Why are correctional education programs so inexpensive? For the most part, higher education in correctional facilities is provided by community colleges and universities that offer moderately priced tuition. A combination of funding sources supports an inmate's education, including in-kind donations from universities and colleges, outside support (foundations, community-based organizations, private donations), and individual contributions from inmates themselves, garnered while working at prison-based jobs... Even in a hypothetical situation with a comparatively expensive correctional higher education program ($2,500 per year, per inmate in New York State) and one of the highest recorded rates of recidivism upon completion of such a program (15%), the savings of providing higher education are still substantial: The cost of incarcerating 100 individuals over 4 years is approximately $10 million. For an additional 1/10th of that cost, or $1 million, those same individuals could be given a full, four-year college education while incarcerated. Assuming a recidivism rate of 15% (as opposed to the general rate of 40-60%), 85 of those initial 100 individuals will not return to prison, saving U.S. taxpayers millions of dollars each year. In addition to the millions saved by preventing an individual's return to incarceration and dependence on the criminal justice system, providing higher education to prisoners can save money in other ways. The prevention of crime helps to eliminate costs to crime victims and the courts, lost wages of the inmate while incarcerated, or costs to the inmate's family."*[59]

Cost estimates of college-in-prison programs, post-1995, confirm relatively low per-student instructional costs for college-in-prison. The Center for Crime, Communities and Culture provided a set of fiscal estimates for the Niagara Consortium, Center for Redirection (College Bound at BHCF) and the DCC-Greenhaven program for 1999 (see Table 4).

**Table 4:** 1999 Comparison Figures for Prison-Based College Programs[60]

| | NIAGARA CONSORTIUM | CENTER FOR REDIRECTION THROUGH EDUCATION | DCC-GREENHAVEN |
|---|---|---|---|
| COST PER STUDENT PER CREDIT HOUR | $151 | $127 | $89 |
| ANNUAL INSTRUCTIONAL COST PER STUDENT | $2,592 | $1,905 | $1,424 |

More recently, in June of 2001, Michael Jacobson re-calculated the estimates for the Center for Redirection/College Bound and found that, at present, costs per student average approximately $1, 465.[45] Per head instructional costs, across three models, are consistently low.

To estimate the costs and benefits over time of college-in-prison, consider the case of 100 men or women who cost the State an average of $25,000 per year to incarcerate, totaling $2.5 million dollars per year. This is a very conservative estimate, insofar as the New York State cost in 1999 was $27,006.35 per inmate per year.[61] With college calculated by the Director of the Center for Redirection to cost $1,905 a year per student, the annual cost equals $2,690,500 per 100 educated inmates. While it is true that the same number of inmates without college costs $2,500,000 annually, the differential reincarceration rates for the two groups turn this initial savings into an increased expense.

Following release, it is estimated that 7.7% of the educated group and 29.9% of the non-educated group will be reincarcerated, conservatively, for an estimated average of 2 years. The extra expenses incurred for withholding college, for one hundred women and men in prison (much less the full prison population in New York State), comes to almost $300,000 for one additional year of imprisonment and over $900,000 for two. This tax saving does not calculate the fiscal and emotional costs of foster care for children of incarcerated adults or elderly care for their parents, lost wages and tax contributions, welfare dependency, disrupted families and communities worsened by reincarceration. Nor does it take into account the loss of emotional, financial and civic resources that well educated men and women, post-release, contribute to their families and communities.

As of January 1, 2000, New York State had 73,826 prisoners.[62] If only a third of these men and women in prison were to participate in a college program while in prison, over $150,000,000 in tax dollars that could be saved or, better yet, allocated to quality education to prevent imprisonment.[63]

The argument here is not that women and men in prison deserve more than other citizens. To the contrary, if prisoners had access to the same support as other citizens, the tax benefits to society at large, as well as the personal/social benefits to women and men in prison, their families and their communities would be enormous. At present, our tax dollars are paying the equivalent of an elite private college education for women and men in prison to be uneducated, without adequate drug treatment and to emerge more cynical, more hardened, more difficult to employ and less likely to engage productive lives than before they entered prison.

*"Have you ever seen crabs in a bucket? Ever notice how when one makes it to the top, another is right there to pull it back down? That's how I feel trying to obtain higher education. There's always someone waiting to pull you down. It's as if caging people is more important than educating them. When those of us in prison are stripped of the opportunity to go to college, prison becomes nothing more than a human warehouse. Do we really want to be known as America – Land of the Free and Home of the Caged? Thinking about this is disheartening, and yet it is the sad reality for me and so many others."*

Donna,
college graduate

*"When I first came to Bedford Hills, I was a chronic disciplinary problem, getting tickets back to back. I had a very poor attitude as well, I was rude and obnoxious for no reason, I did not care about anything or anyone... Then I became motivated to participate in a number of programs, one of which was college. I started to care about getting in trouble and became conscious of the attitude I had that influenced my negative behaviors... College is a form of rehabilitation, one of the best."*

Denise,
college student,
mother of three

## SECTION II. COLLEGE AS A POSITIVE MANAGEMENT TOOL IN THE PRISON

*"[College] opens the door to viable alternatives to cycles of criminal behavior and further incarceration. Within the prison, it can be a positive management tool motivating women to change."*

Elaine Lord
BHCF Superintendent

*"I cannot stress enough how powerful a factor college has been in maintaining peace and well-being in prisons."*

George W. Webber
Professor of Urban Ministry
President Emeritus, New York
Theological Seminary

While no direct evidence on disciplinary incidents could be collected for this study due to the strictly confidential nature of such reports, interviews with administrators, corrections officers, inmates and faculty consistently confirm the Superintendent's and theologian Webber's observation: college creates a more "peaceful" and manageable prison environment. Indeed, 93% of prison wardens strongly support educational and vocational programming for adult inmates.[63] Disciplinary incidents are less likely to occur. When tensions do arise, educated inmates are more likely to opt away from trouble, especially if participation in college courses is jeopardized.[64]

*"When faced with a confrontation, I walk away. I don't let them bother me... I don't react to everything they say. In the past I would have fought the girl, [but now] I don't want to lose the program. I don't want to fight because I'm in college."*

Fatima, college student

*"I mean to a point where we don't have to worry about the stabbings, the fighting within the facility. College gives them something else to occupy their time and occupy their minds... The more educated the women are, the better they can express themselves and the easier it is to manage them. The better educated women can take care of themselves better within the facility..."*

Corrections Officer Fiske

A number of the corrections officers agreed to be interviewed. While they vary with respect to whether or not they believe that college-in-prison should be publicly funded, they were unanimous in noting the positive impact of college on the women and the prison environment. Officer Lewis, for instance, is pleased with the program, although he does not approve of public funding for prisoner education: *"Everyone should have an education, whether they are an inmate or a teenager on the street. Education improves a person — [the prison administration is] trying to do everything they can to improve the lives of these women. The women are here because they committed a crime and they really need to be helped and this is one way of giving them help. But it is not fair for tax payers to be footing the bill, particularly when there are people who haven't committed crimes who can't afford to send their own kids to college... [but] college is a great way to keep the inmates occupied and busy so that they don't get into trouble. You don't want inmates to get out of prison with the same limited opportunities they had when they came in. You have to make sure they have some new opportunities, so that they can enter the blue-collar workforce."*

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Officer Cross participated as a student in a sign language class with some of the college students: *"We learned each other's names and... a lot of [inmate students] went into detail about how they grew up and what occurred in their families, so I found that to be very interesting and it gives you a different outlook as far as your feelings toward these women... You get to know them a little better. I mean, unfortunately, it could be any of us in the same position... it definitely could be any of us, but I'm glad I chose a different route, because it is not what I wanted, but unfortunately it happens."*

All of the Officers agreed that when funds were withdrawn from Mercy College, the loss of college caused, *"a definite change in morale, the women seemed deflated."* In contrast, the presence of college enriches the prison environment in terms of discipline — *"Maturity! Maturity! They're more mature because they are learning and they have something to occupy their time and they have less time to get into other activities."*

Corrections Officer Woodruff

A number of faculty, as well as students and Corrections Officers, commented that women's involvement in and appreciation of college seem to take the rough edge off of potentially tense or confrontational classroom moments. One faculty member, Professor Powell, noted that in her classroom, students discipline each other. *"I think in my Bedford classes, these are the only places I've ever taught where other students have cooperated in disciplining somebody who gets out of hand... I've never experienced that...with such wisdom."*

While faculty testify about the power of teaching within a prison, perhaps most compelling are the comments from corrections officers, often hard-working men and women struggling to support their own, or their children's, college educations. These officers, for the most part, resonate with the words of Officer Sampson, who was initially quite skeptical about college-in-prison, and yet, goes on to say: *"Well, [education] does a few things. Predominantly, it gives the inmates self-esteem that they lack when they come in. It gives them something to strive for. I mean, there are so many miracle stories down there [in the education department]... At first I was like, you know, as a corrections officer you learn to separate yourself... Inmates are inmates, and officers are officers. But after dealing with them on a one-to-one basis and you start learning about them, you get a sense that you get where they come from, what kind of background they had... They ask for advice and you become a counselor also, besides a corrections officer. And they'll bring you their grades and if they have a problem they come over and ask me to see if I can help them. And overall, the transformation they make from coming in initially... I can't even put it into words."*

*"I was surprised by the intelligence and spirituality of some of the inmates. BHCF has indeed become a 'house of healing' for some of the women."*

Professor Moreno

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## SECTION III. COLLEGE SUPPORTS POWERFUL TRANSFORMATIONS WITHIN STUDENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

*"And that's what happens in here, in this very dark place. We are educated. We go to college and we learn new things. And we have a lot of confidence. Not only our self-esteem, but we even have something to offer others."*

Rose, college graduate, serving 25 years to life

The numbers provided by NYSDOCS and former Commissioner Jacobson tell us ***that*** college-in-prison reduces reincarceration, crime and taxes. Corrections administrators and officers report that college diminishes the likelihood of disciplinary incidents. The interviews with women in prison and their children, correction officers, faculty, community members and women post-release tell us ***why***. In some ways the story is simple. College offers an opportunity for women in prison to think, grow, reflect on the past and reimagine responsible futures. College signals a process of personal development and transforms the devastation of prison into an opportunity to turn one's life around. College enables — for most — a safe and final transition out of prison.

The College Bound program was designed carefully and collaboratively to help women in prison develop the skills and strength necessary for successful transitions out of prison. The College Bound program was structured to:

- *stimulate intellectual and personal growth for individual students;*
- *build a supportive community of learners among the women in the college;*
- *encourage inmate participation, responsibility and a commitment to giving back to the prison environment and communities post-release.*

In the College Bound program, students are expected to engage in serious academic work. To gain entrance into the Marymount Manhattan College program, students must satisfy the same entrance criteria that students on the outside are required to fulfill, including passing a set of rigorous entrance exams. Once in, most students aim to complete a degree — to the extent possible — before they leave prison.

At the heart of the program are rules for student participation and giving back. College builds a context for transformation and responsibility that the women take with them as they leave the facility. As suggested by the Inmate Committee, all women pay a fee of $10 per semester — the equivalent of one month's wages — for their education. In order to encourage student ownership of the program, the Inmate Committee and outside volunteers agreed that such payment would be psychologically and politically significant. Further, the contribution was designed to recognize the difficulty poor and working-class people who are not in prison confront as they try to pay for higher education.

Classes are offered in the evening after a full day of work. Women promise to tutor other women while in the facility, and others once they are released. The women are, many for the first time in their lives, expected to participate as engaged "citizens" in this community of learners, taking much and giving back more. Indeed, as you will hear later in the document, many of these women find themselves surprised that they can be effective mentors, that they have something to give back, and that they are able to make an academic contribution to others.

At BHCF, the college program sits within a carefully structured matrix of educational programs, ranging from Adult Basic Education (ABE) to the GED, pre-college, vocational programs and College Bound. Once the college program developed as "a light to redirect ourselves," enrollment in prerequisite and auxiliary programs heightened as well. Passing the GED, in this context, is often a first step into the little-known world of higher education. Debra describes a typical, bumpy road toward the GED: *"...finally the GED came. I took it and I didn't pass. I was so devastated... I only needed like one or two points and I was like really, really hurt, crushed. But I was like...maybe if I study a little harder next time, I could get it. So that pushed me. Whenever I had free time after that, I was always studying my books."*

A month later Debra was called by an officer to come to the education center. Two of her teachers and several fellow students were waiting for her.

*"So I got the envelope. I opened it and a copy of my diploma fell out, and I just started crying. Tears just started coming to my eyes. I was like 'Oh! I got it! I finally...' I was so happy. I made so many copies. I sent it to my grandfather, to my son, to my daughter, to everybody! To let them know, you know, that I was in school and just, you know, I may be away but I'm doing something to better myself while I'm here. My grandpa was so proud."*

As women move from ABE to GED, and on to pre-college and college, they acquire new skills, points of view, networks and expectations for themselves. They also shed old views of themselves, insecurities, some old friends and even older habits. Professor Clements notes, *"[It takes time for the women] to take away their masks. Their voices should be heard because many of these young women and older women have never had an occasion to speak and be heard... [Initially] there's a shyness and reticence; then they learn that their lives have been valuable and unique, and there's a dignity within themselves that they could hold onto."*

The women describe the plunge into college as an immersion in books and ideas. It is important to remember that for the most part, these are the very women for whom public education did not work the first time. Their academic biographies are heavily seasoned with failure. With college, the capacity to reflect on the past actions and plan responsible futures strengthens. Mary admits with irony: *"I was in a much bigger prison before I got here, but I didn't know it."*

Many women talk about college-in-prison as a kind of insurance on their futures. For these women, college isn't simply a credential or a promotion at work. College is an opportunity to prepare for the final transition out of prison. In the following quote, Roz a woman who is serving a 50 year-to-life sentence, speaks like many of the women. She describes an "old self" in need of change, anxiety about the rigorous nature of college work, the experience of a "whole new world" opening up, and the powerful relationship between her new found sense of personal agency and social responsibility.

*"I was so young when I came here... I waited ten years to go to school. And when I started going to schoo! ..it was a whole new world. Being able to exchange ideas and learn new ways of life, and learn about the classics and learn about methodology — opened this whole new*

*"I'm the head cook [at the prison] and it's very hard. You know, it's very hard working eight hours...and it's a physical task. Then I have to go to school at night, which is a mental, you know, task... So I have to, I have to kind of like psyche myself up. I have to make room in my life. Well, I'll rest for an hour then I'll come to the College Bound, complete my homework and go back to sleep at night. You know, I have to make time for that."*

Lourdes, a Pre-College student



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*world for me. I was overwhelmed at first, but then I got to a point where inside of me it was an urge. It was, like, 'You can do this.' You know, I wanted to learn more. I wanted to get more... I sort of started identifying with the world, understanding the world better; understanding...my crime and why I was here...I just wanted to read everything... I wanted to know more, I wanted to explore... And I found that...I started surrounding myself with people of like minds. Because when I first came here I... had a chip on my shoulder that I wanted somebody to knock off... I stayed in trouble. I was disrespectful. I had no self-respect, no respect for others. And it took a while for me to change gradually through the years, and... when I started going to college that was like the key point for me of rehabilitation, of changing myself. And nobody did it for me, I did it for myself... [I] realize that, you know, I have an education and this education is going to carry me someplace. And even if I don't get a better job, I'll be a better person because of it. And that's, that's what it's all about."*

Roz, college graduate
serving 50 to life

Our data validate for college-in-prison what other researchers have found about higher education for "non-traditional" students in general. The core elements of education, such as self-reflection, critique and inquiry, enable a transformed sense of self and, in turn, the women contribute to a rich college community.[66] Women see themselves and society, critically and reflexively. Said another way, college enables students to move from seeing themselves as passive objects into seeing themselves as active subjects. Critical thinkers who actively participate in their lives and social surroundings take responsibility for past and future actions and view themselves as engaged in changing society and themselves.

Professor Jones, a poet, explains how the women develop what she calls voices of the soul, *"Poetry has to come from inside. And there's always a little bit of a resistance at first, and then a little hiding, a little secretiveness. Like one person who wrote a poem about the old man, or her old man. And then we all finally learned to jump on her and say, 'What is it? What does it mean? You can't hide!' And she said, 'That's what I call my virus.' And it was that way, through those kinds of needs, that we got to know each other. And you have to trust people... i was happy to see a kind of competition starting in that those who were willing to divulge encountered those who had been hiding all the time... You know, the adults that I teach on the outside, they come regularly because they've paid their good money. The kids at colleges...don't come regularly because it's their parents' good money they're spending. What do they care? But these women at Bedford feel that this is their good time, and so it's been just that, for me, and I really thank them for that."*

College prepares women for their transitions out of prison because it provokes critical perspectives. Students come to see themselves as independent thinkers who have decisions to make. Faculty attest that in their classrooms, students often start out seeing the social deck stacked against them. Most have experienced a combination of poverty, racial discrimination, poor schools and often violent homes. Women new to BHCF typically see life as a "set up." They argue that little can be done to improve their circumstances. Such an attitude disables women in prison from seeing that they do have options, can make choices and can embark on actions to alter the course of their lives and participate in social change projects. Through education, many of the women take the opportunity to critically re-assess social conditions, their pasts, presents and

futures, and the opportunities available (and denied) to others in their home communities. The women develop a language and ethic of personal and social responsibility.

**Strengthened Sense of Responsibility for Crime, Family and Society**

*"I can think and talk about my victim now. It's not just 'the bitch cut me and I cut her back.' Even that idea comes out differently now, 'the girl cut me and I chose to strike back.' Those words weren't in me before, but now, just having the words to articulate things, puts them into perspective differently."*

Tanisha, college graduate,
still at BHCF

Women often describe a connection between their college experiences and a growing sense of responsibility — for their crime, to their victims and victims' families; to their children, families and communities from whom they are separated; to friends and fellow students, and to social change. One of the more difficult aspects of this process occurs when the women reflect, deliberately and critically, on their crimes and the consequences to the victims and the victims' families. In the college program, they join a community through which they are able to make sense of sometimes horrifying pasts, terrible mistakes and possible futures.

Rayla talks about how college affected her feelings about her crime: *"At first I was incapable of feeling anything but a fretful kind of regret. After having time to reevaluate how many people were hurt and the ridiculous choices I made, I had a chance to feel sorry. I know what role I would like to play now... I think the process of going to college and all these other things, my remorse turned into wanting to make amends. Wanting to make things better. Helping others not make the same mistakes...[College creates] a lot of self-reflection. [I recognize] the pain of being separated from my family, of knowing that I hurt others from my actions. [I] definitely thank God."*

Mentoring and "giving back" have been embroidered into the fabric of the college program. In a culture of peer support, tutoring and mentoring, the women come to understand themselves as connected to a larger social context, one that is affected by their actions and one to which they are accountable. Martina Leonard, Executive Assistant to the President of Marymount Manhattan College, provided an image of how the women, once educated, commit to educating others even after they leave BHCF: *"One woman told me last June about a former Bedford student who was so appreciative about having the college program because now at Albion [another prison] she and other students were the leaders there, working to educate other women. They're tutors and mentors to other students and they feel that just having that college program at Bedford Hills has really allowed them to begin to...help other people."*

Faculty note that this commitment to "giving back" becomes contagious: *"The women are like shooting stars that move from one world to another...[but so too are the faculty]. We have a teacher who taught a class and met some students who were involved in the parenting program [at Bedford] and working with the teens, the teenage children of inmates. As a result of his coming to the teen meeting last Saturday, he's going to help get some kids into camp this summer [and work with] the Beacon School programs in New York City. So there's*

*"Education softens you too. It's made me soften. I think about things more. I appreciate things more. People. Their feelings. And it made me feel differently about the crime. Before I was stupid. I had that thug mentality. That street thing. That hard thing. But now, you can do anything to me, and I'm not going to react like that. I'm not going there."*

Francine,
college senior



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*"On my cell block, the ticking of typewriter keys can be heard late into the night. Some nights a young inmate knocks softly on my wall, after midnight, asking me how to spell or punctuate... That's what college means in prison."*

Sophia,
serving 20 to life

*"The women raved about the course. They felt like science was demystified. They understood how to take care of their bodies. They were ready to write a petition to Albany about the high level of carbohydrates and fat in the prison diet...and they are yelling at their kids for too many potato chips!"*

Science
Professor Alcoff

*just a myriad of ways that the impact of the college program connects with other programs within and beyond the facility."*

Professor Andrews

The research was designed, in part, to investigate the extent to which involvement in college facilitates women's sense of responsibility and civic participation while in prison and post-release. The research team learned from interviews with faculty, corrections officers, women in prison and post-release, that college graduates go on to develop, facilitate and evaluate many prison and community-based programs. These programs address far ranging issues such as anger management, substance abuse, HIV and AIDS, domestic violence, sexual abuse, parenting skills and support and prenatal care. Each of these programs has to be written up as a proposal and formally submitted to the Superintendent for approval. Developing and running programs within the facility is one way college students and graduates "give back" to their peers.

**The Influence of Mothers' Educational Pursuits on Children's Academic Motivation**

With bitter acknowledgement, many of the women speak as mothers, daughters and sisters about the impact college has had on their sense of debt to their families in terms of helping children with homework, being a role model for their children and grandchildren, and fulfilling broken promises.

There is a strong developmental literature that confirms the impact of a mother's education on her children's academic aspirations and achievement. The children of educated mothers not only do better in school but also stay longer, are held back less often, have higher educational aspirations and are more likely to decide to go to college.[67] It has been found that the best predictor of a child's educational success is the educational attainment of his or her mother across social classes, races and ethnicities.

This relationship has not been tested across the telephone lines and geography separating children from mothers in prison. It is nevertheless important to note that the research team heard from both children and mothers about the strong influence that maternal commitment to college held on the academic ambitions of their adolescent children. In interviews with early adolescent children who visit the prison for a Teen Group, youths indicated an ironic pride in their mother's college experiences. For some of these youth, their mothers — although in prison — are role models pioneering new educational frontiers.

*"My mother is the only person I know who went to college. As far as anybody else, like any other grown-up I ask, they said they never went to college."*

Sarah, age 15

The youth told us about the lessons they learned from their mothers' experience in college: lessons of perseverance, possibility and hard work. Despite the stigma and shame through which many spoke, their mothers' involvement in college enabled a new story that could honestly be told to friends and teachers. As Shanice, age 12, explains: *"My teacher is always asking me how's your mother...[and I say] 'She's okay, she's at college.' I brag about her to all my teachers."*

*"Because when you take somebody who feels that they're not going to amount to anything... and you put them in an environment... like,* ***when you're in college it takes you away from the prison,*** *you know what I'm saying? I can't really find the words, but it's like, you're* ***opening your mind to a whole different experience****. But you're still in prison, but once you're in that class it's like you're not in prison, you know? You're here getting an education. You know so much. It's like,* ***things that you never even thought that you would learn...*** *I didn't know anything about India and China and the opium war... And it took me to go to Bedford, to go to Mercy College, to take up that class in order for me to learn that, you know what I'm saying? I didn't know about Sigmund Freud, none of that! But reading the books and writing... I'm telling you, it was just so amazing for me, I was like bugged out, because I... I never would've known. To me, [College] puts you on a higher level. It broadens your way of thinking, you know?* ***And it's something that you could use for the rest of your life.****"*

*Sarah, college student*

*has served 8 years at BHCF*

While proud of their mothers' accomplishments, the youth also described concrete ways in which they, and their mothers, worked through homework, academic problems, tough times. Demetrius, age 16 reports: *"[When I] spend time with her it's like, we seem to like working together. 'Cause she'll have questions to ask, and we'll have questions to ask her, so forth and so on. And it's like I know she's happy about it. I know [for a fact]... she's not happy with what the situation is, but she has an opportunity to get an education, I know she's extremely pleased about that.' Cause beforehand she never had that opportunity. I guess now she's taking advantage of it."*

The pride, reciprocity and delight at their mothers' educational persistence is tinged with a recognition, by some, that their mothers might not have succeeded academically had they not gone to prison. It was sobering to hear, from youth, one of the bitter ironies of this study. Prison has become a place for intellectual, emotional and social growth for some women. A space free of male-violence, drugs and overwhelming responsibilities, college-in-prison carves out a space which nurtures a kind of growth and maturity that would perhaps not have been realized on the outside. The experience of watching their mothers succeed in school opens up complicated feelings for some of the children. They ask themselves what might have been, if their mothers had not gone to prison. Some children felt strongly that their mothers would eventually have continued their education. Others were not so sure.

*"I don't think she would have. I don't know, because this really, when she came here it really turned her around. I don't even know if she would have stopped doing what she was doing, or whatever. But when she came up here she, she could really... [steer herself right]... for the rest of her life, she probably said, 'Well, I need a change.'"*

Paul, age 12

*"Well, I don't think, personally I don't think that my mother would have gone back to school if she was out there, because she would be too interested in being with her friends and fighting...and, you know, taking [up]...from me, 'cause I'm very violent, too, when it comes to somebody bothering me. So, I don't think she would be in school."*

Tasheena, age 13

Through the conflicted emotions of abandonment, disappointment, pride and inspiration, these youth have learned many tough lessons from their mothers, and from their mothers' imprisonments.

*"My mother is extremely proud about her GED... I've seen her do certain things... [learn] skills that she's good at. As far as her aspiring and working this hard, I know she's like, she's really happy with it. Because it's something that her mother or her sisters never put their hearts to... and she is."*

DeShawn, age 14

*"My daughter is proud of me and it gives her incentive to want to go (to college). I remember she asked me, if she had to go to college if she didn't want to. My response was no, she didn't have to if she didn't want. Then I sent her my grades with a little note that said, 'Not bad for a 30 year old Mom, huh?' When I spoke with her after that she said, if her mother could do it so could she."*

Tanya, college student

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## SECTION IV. LASTING TRANSITIONS OUT OF PRISON

Even with all the skills and strengths developed through college, life after prison is difficult. As recent testimonies in national media publications detail, the world waiting for former inmates, especially those with few resources, can feel insurmountable.[68] Women — now with a criminal record — typically return to lives of poverty, many unable to vote, with few opportunities, and damaged, if not, shattered social networks. The research team interviewed 20 graduates of the Mercy College program post-release. These women have been out of prison for an average of 8.6 years, ranging from one to 23 years. Of the 20, 18 are employed, one is on disability and another is retired. The majority (88%) of the employed women work in social service organizations. Thirteen (65%) of the women are pursing graduate degrees, most commonly in social work. All but four of the women had stable housing at the time of the interview. Six women (30%) report serious health problems. The women spoke with us about their rocky transitions out of prison.

Issues facing women as they reintegrate into society range from the details of everyday living to large structural barriers. These women must relearn how to negotiate overcrowded subways, cell-phones and ATM machines, as well as the job market and the healthcare system. They face challenges in *housing*, with many women fearing shelters for themselves and their children and often encountering difficulty securing Section 8 status; *employment*, employers are not eager to hire women with felony convictions; *parenting and family*, after long absences reuniting with children and family and resuming leadership roles in children's lives can be unexpectedly difficult; *health care*, inadequate health care in prison often results in cumulative problems upon release, and a lack of *support networks*, relationships with formerly incarcerated peers are forbidden by parole, while transitional programs for women are few and under-resourced.

Linda comments that college gave her the skills to withstand these unexpected difficulties of "coming home": *"I'm a thinker now. Before I was a reactor. So that's what's changed... If you're educated and you are well informed about a lot of things, you have a tendency to look at life through a whole different perspective. And I know people might [ask] how can just a degree add so much internally? But that's all it's about, because once you learn that you are capable, you know what I mean? It's like knowing that you're not stuck in the substance abuse world, that you do have a brain, and that brain tells you, 'Oh, you do have choices,' or, 'You are capable of having a job.' Because now you have the skills, you have the education. It makes you qualified. So, education is the biggest piece. I can't stress it enough. Without that I don't know where I would be. I'd probably be back doing another [prison term]...Probably. I'm being perfectly honest. Because [education] was the thing that turned my whole life around. It really did."*

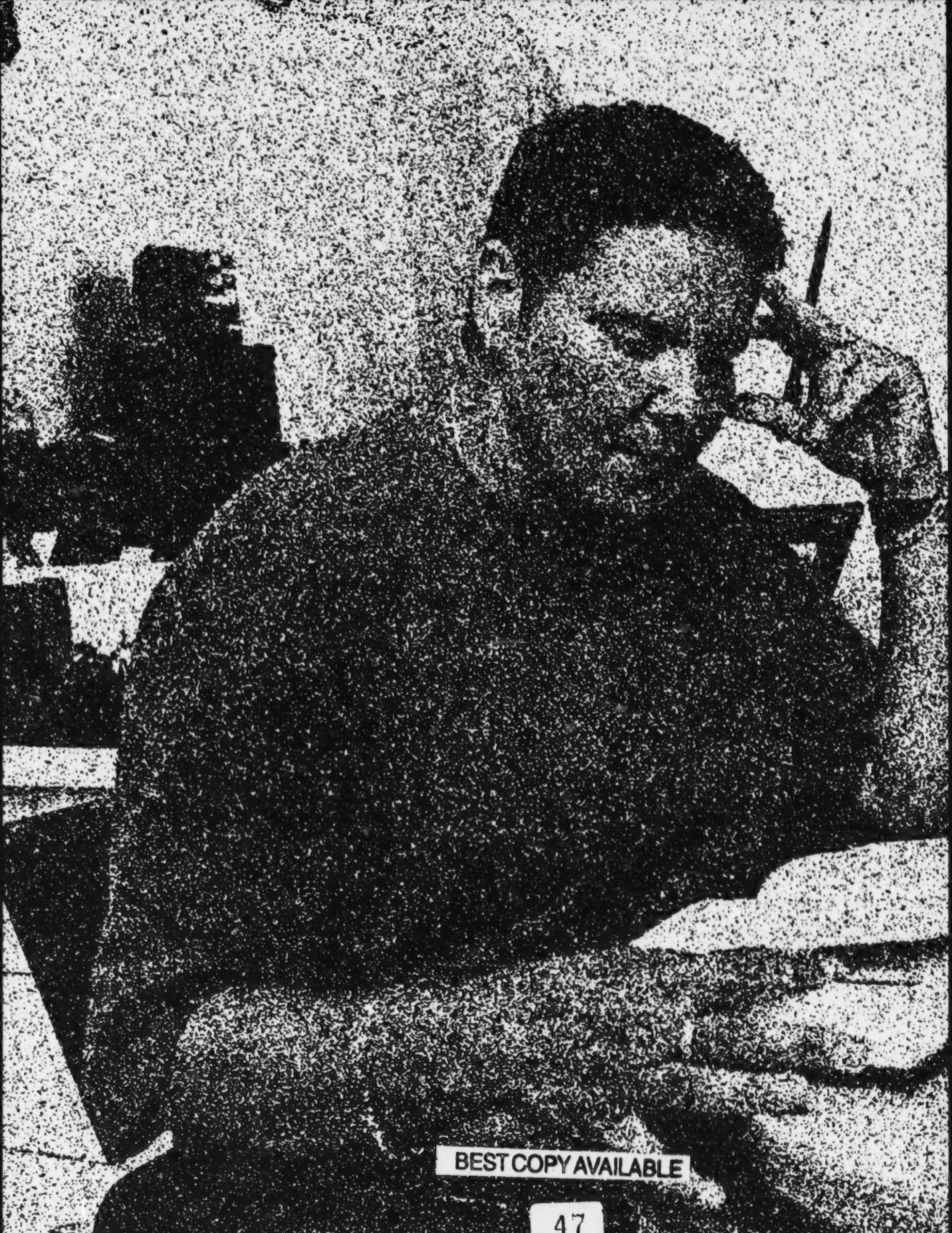
The few employers whom we met, as we interviewed women on the outside, attest to the sense of responsibility practiced by these women. Indeed men and women who have attended college while incarcerated have a significantly higher rate of employment (60 - 70%) upon release than those who do not (40%).[69] Frank Tower, owner of a carpet business in New York City explains, *"I have employed women with criminal records for years now and I have found them*

*to be careful, hard working employees. In fact I think they are some of the best employees I have had. They take the job very seriously and because of their experiences they don't take anything for granted. We work with the public so it is important for my workers to be respectful and troubleshoot customer's needs. I have no complaints and I think my customers would say the same."*

In addition to paid work, many women return to college soon after release. Migdalia Martinez, one of the authors of this report, was granted clemency by Governor George Pataki at the end of the year 2000. She arrived on the campus of Marymount Manhattan College the day of her release, eager to learn how she could re-enroll "on the outside." Juanita, while at Albion Correctional Facility, received educational counseling from a fellow inmate and former participant of the College Bound program at BHCF. Shortly after her release, Juanita enrolled in the recommended transitional program designed to support women who are returning to higher education post-release. She is now nearing completion of her Bachelor's Degree from City College.

As women try to carve out new lives post-incarceration, many feel a personal and professional need to continue their education.[69] College is viewed as a sustaining lifeline; a way to keep the mind, sense of personal growth and social support networks alive. Sandra, a graduate of the Mercy program, now home from BHCF, describes this draw to return to college: *"[O]nce you get open for school, you know that there's another level that you can go to... I know I probably won't be satisfied 'til I get my Master's Degree. I know that. But I'm saying, it's not that I won't feel complete. But I know, that the level that I want to be on requires that, you know what I mean? And I'll eventually get it, 'cause I really want that. I want that title, you know? CSW, you know? An MBA, or something!... [laughs]... It could be anything... My main concern is keeping the ties [to education], you know, keeping the link open."*

A problem arises, however, for the men and women who have been incarcerated in New York State under drug-related sentences. The recently added Question 28 on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), asks, "Have you ever been convicted of possessing or selling illegal drugs?" Approved by Congress in 1998 and put into effect in 2000, answering yes to Question 28 renders an individual with one drug conviction ineligible for financial aid for one year. Individuals with two convictions are ineligible for two years. Those with three or more convictions are ineligible for financial aid indefinitely.[70] For many women interested in returning to college or pursuing graduate work, as 58% of those interviewed were, Question 28 may pose a very real threat to post-release transitions.



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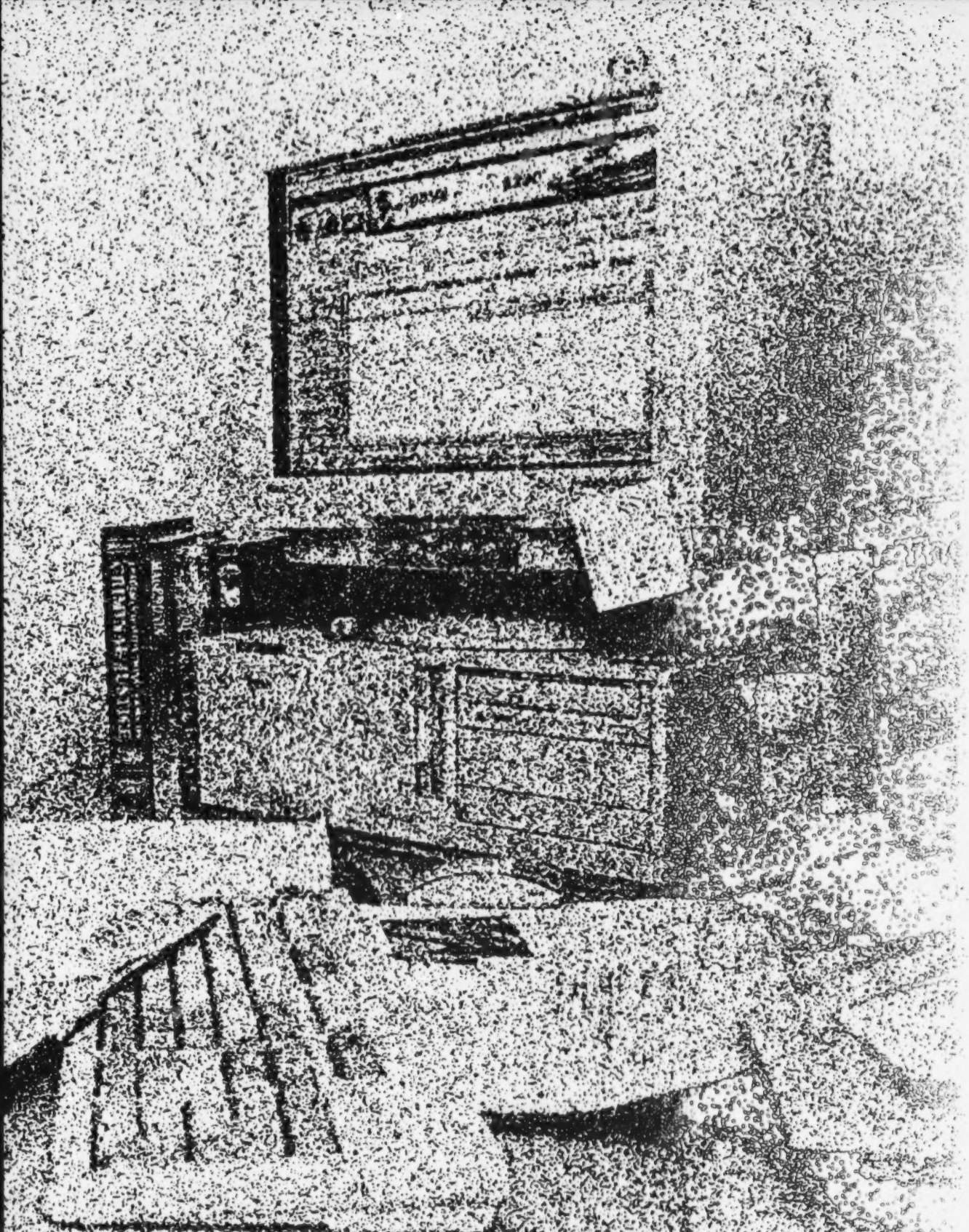

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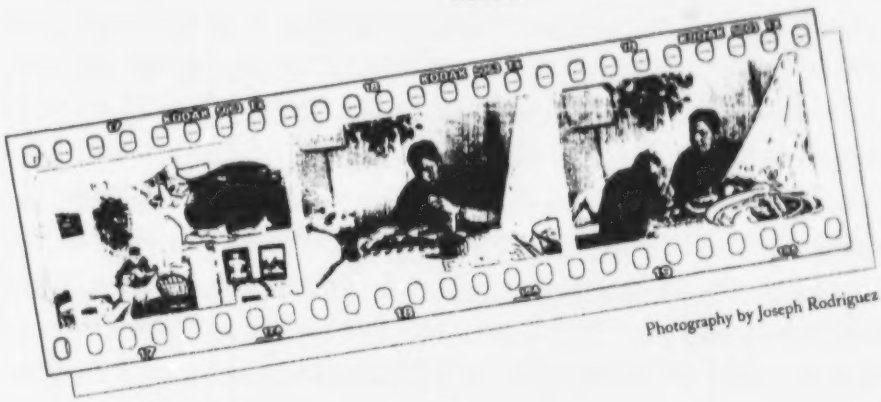
*"My life now is 180 degrees different than before. It's about living in the present, about enjoying my freedom, my life and all the richness life has to offer. I have a lot of new friends, a new perspective, and a new home with Freckles and Tigra, my dog and cat. I love my animals. I have a special bond with them. We share a closeness, like they are my family, my children. The unconditional love I receive from them helps me realize just how special I am and how much love I have to offer."*

Mikki



Photography by Joseph Rodriguez

LISA FINKLE
VALEDICTORIAN SPEECH,
COLLEGE BOUND, BHCF
JUNE 10, 1999

Each year, the valedictorian has the awesome privilege of saying "Farewell" on behalf of her graduating class. I want you to know that I really intended to do this. But, somehow, this year it didn't really seem appropriate to say "farewell." So, in defiance of perhaps a few *hundred* years of tradition, I've chosen to say something else, something I believe better represents the class of 1999. To understand this, you need to take note for just a few seconds of the many great accomplishments that women have achieved during this century. Although there are too many to name them all, I would like to point out just three that are very relevant to this moment.

The first actually began in the 1600's when a woman by the name of Margaret Brent declared that women should have both a place and a voice in the political discourse that shapes our country, our lives and our futures. It took 300 years of perseverance, determination, and hard work, by women such as Anthony, Stone, and Chapman, and it required standing firm and believing in the ability of women to achieve their goals, even in the face of political, economic, legislative and social obstacles. Yet, on August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment was adopted, stating that the right to vote shall not be denied on account of sex.

The second great achievement happened, of all places, on a bus in 1955, in Montgomery Alabama, when a woman named Rosa Parks decided one day that she believed in herself, and in her worth as a human being. This woman decided to *stand firm* in the identity that she chose for herself in spite of the fact that society had determined to stigmatize and label her, and to tell her that she was not valuable to them. Rosa Parks made history.

The third and last *great achievement* that I will mention, happened very recently in our history. Like the women's suffrage movement, it involved a group of women with the goal of improving their lives, gaining their own voice, determining their own identity and finding their own place in our society's discourse. It too, took perseverance, determination, and hard work, by women such as Cheryl Wilkins, Elaine Bartlett, Julia Blanco, Iris Bowen, Ingrid Carrero, Aisha Elliot, Migdalia Martinez Arlene Oberg Denise Solla, Veronica Flournoy, and Carolyn Nurse.

We, the class of 1999, are also women who are standing firm and who believe in our ability to *achieve*, even in the face of political, legislative, economic and social obstacles. We too are women who have decided that we believe in ourselves and in our worth as human beings, in spite of the fact that society has tried to stigmatize and label us, and to tell us that we are not valuable to them. So, like the other great women who went before us throughout this century, we have actively determined to change the course of our lives, and in so doing, we have begun to change the course of history for all women.

Therefore, on behalf of the graduating class of 1999, a class of women who have found our voices and our place as women, and who will *not* move to the back of *any* bus, I will not say farewell, because the world and its history simply have not heard the last from us yet This century is nearly over, but for us today is just the beginning.

With this in mind, I would like to thank the Superintendent Elaine Lord and the administration for providing us with the place, and the college consortium, the board of directors, the task force and, of course, our teachers, for allowing us our voice. Our hats are off to *all of you.*

I particularly need to thank the teacher most responsible for helping me to find my own place of distinction, Ms. Barbara Martinson. Last, but never least, I would like to thank my family, especially my Dad and my Grandma for teaching me all the valuable things that college can't. And the Lord my God, for the faith and the hope that has brought me this far... Thank you.

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# CONCLUSIONS

*"Educating the incarcerated is not an exercise in futility, nor is it a gift to the undeserving. It is a practical and necessary safeguard to insure that those who have found themselves without the proper resources to succeed have these needs met before they are released. It is a gift to ourselves and to our children, a gift of both compassion and peace of mind. We are not turning the other cheek to those who have hurt us. We are taking their hands and filling them with learning so that they can't strike us again."*

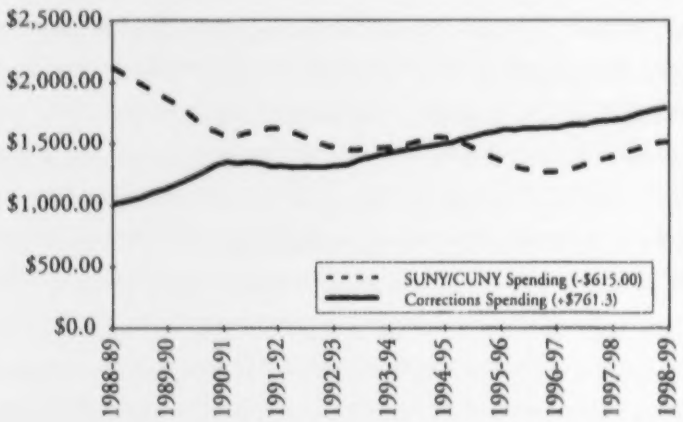
Janice Grieshaber
Executive Director, The Jenna Foundation for Non-Violence

With a generosity born of tragedy that is hard to imagine, Janice Grieshaber, just three years after her daughter's murder, articulates a concern voiced by so many families of victims. She actively supports higher education for men and women in prison. She is concerned that the current policy of locking up criminals and offering them little support is dangerous for us all.

Relying upon qualitative and quantitative measures, collected by researchers in BHCF, Graduate Center researchers and researchers from the New York State Department of Correctional Services, the evidence in this report points to the same conclusion that Grieshaber articulates: ***college-in-prison reduces reincarceration rates and crime, accelerates a process of personal growth and transformation, enhances a sense of social responsibility, facilitates positive management of the prison and reduces the tax burden prisons impose on the citizens of New York State.***

In recent years, young adults have moved in unprecedented numbers from poor communities, particularly communities of color, into prisons with few or no programs. In parallel fashion, public dollars have moved from education to corrections. Nationally, from 1977 to 1995, the average state increased correctional funding by two times more than funding for public colleges. In 1988 New York's public university funding was double that of the prison system. Over the past decade, New York reduced public higher education spending by 29%, while state corrections enjoyed a 76% budget increase (see Table 5). During that same time period, SUNY and CUNY tuition rates were raised and remediation programs were withdrawn from the senior CUNY campuses. Tuition rates rose to account for 25% of White families' incomes and a full 42% of Black or Latino families'[71]. As public education moves out of reach for poor and working-class families, the long arm of prison moves closer in.

**Table 5:** Higher Education Funding vs. Prison Funding in the Empire State, 1988-1998. (in the millions)*




* Table reprinted with permission of the Correctional Association of New York, 1998.

Prison construction has become a big business in the United States, supporting a number of rural and deindustrialized communities, restoring an economic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base, for instance, to a series of towns in Upstate New York. It is often said, in New York, that "Downstate's crime is Upstate's industry." Yet questions of public accountability loom large. Has the public been informed about the shift in dollars from higher education to prison? Has the public approved the mass proliferation of prisons and the dramatic increase in imprisonment, particularly within African American and Latino communities? Has the public been fully educated to understand the consequences of shifting public dollars from education into prison construction and then withdrawing public dollars for education within prison?

Quality education is needed to prevent young people from entering prisons. For those who do find themselves within prisons and jails, quality education within and after prison makes an enormous difference to inmates, the prison environment and successful post-release transitions. Quality education, from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and higher education, may be the most promising investment and industry that New York State can offer its citizens.

There are a series of policy issues that deserve further attention — for the nation, for prisons and for colleges or universities considering collaborations with prisons. National and state policy issues concern, at minimum, the restoration of Pell and Tap grants, or otherwise available public grants to support higher education within prison. The BHCF model is unique, vibrant and built on the energy of volunteer individuals and institutions. Citizens and community members from the Westchester and New York City area mobilized when Congress and the state withdrew funding. The community understood the significance of college-in-prison. However, a fully volunteer program, no matter how vibrant, is fragile. At present, federal and state governments — by refusing to subsidize college-in-prison — enforce a policy that insures heightened reincarceration rates, unsafe communities and prolonged ignorance. This state of affairs is worsened by a provision in the 1994 Violent Crime Bill which specifies that persons convicted of a drug related felony may be ineligible for federal financial aid even after release from prison. Those former inmates affected by this provision, while eager to turn their lives around post-release, are systematically denied access to federal financial aid for college because of a crime for which they have already served time. As Mayor Ed Koch testified at recent New York State Senate Hearings on Criminal Justice Reform, "When is the punishment over?"[72]

In contrast to current policy, by supporting federal and state aid for college-in-prison — as in the 2001 Workplace and Community Transition for Incarcerated Youth Offenders Grant — governments would be advocating and implementing policies which reduce reincarceration rates, reduce crime, cut the tax burden of prison construction and maintenance, render prisons more "peaceful" and manageable, build stronger communities and support healthier transitions back into society. One might deduce: *To be tough on crime, we must educate prisoners.*

College-in-prison must be part of the broader national conversation about prison reform, alternatives to incarceration and transitions out of prison. Likewise, the inequities of public education within impoverished communities must be redressed, for it is those schools that are, unfortunately, often the pipelines to prison.

# POLICY ISSUES FOR COLLEGE-IN-PRISON

A number of issues are worthy of consideration before and throughout the establishment of a college program within a prison. Listed below is a sampling of some of the more acute issues that deserve serious deliberation.

1. ***Any college program designed for a prison must explicitly and continuously address the questions of community and student participation in shaping, sustaining and governing the college program.*** In the early stages of conceptualizing the college program at BHCF, the model reflected high levels of leadership and participation from among the prison administration, universities and colleges, the local community, volunteers, inmate leaders, students and faculty. Such collaboration was crucial to the design, stability and success of the College program. Over time, however, the contradictions of a participatory college program in prison grew more apparent. As the Superintendent herself has noted, she manages a *"para-military organization that has strong participatory commitments."*

BHCF is a maximum-security facility. The prison administration maintains a strong hold on who enters, with what frequency and how closely outsiders work with insiders. At the same time, college learning, particularly in the absence of State funding, requires extraordinary reliance upon volunteers, deep participatory commitments and engagement by all relevant parties. Initial and ongoing conversations about structures and processes for participation are crucial for sustaining a college program within a prison. In the absence of regular communication and checking-in, tensions and misunderstandings are inevitable. To lose student or community participation is to sacrifice an element crucial to the success of this model.

2. ***Pre-college and English for speakers of other languages are essential to the success of a prison-based college program.*** Both pre-college and ESOL programs facilitate women's entry into higher education through the provision of skills and a community of support. Given the low levels of academic achievement with which women enter the facility, a quality pre-college program is essential. Further, with respect toESOL, the population of Latinas atBHCF has doubled in the last three decades. Many Latinas at BHCF are monolingual Spanish-speakers and many are undocumented. The particular needs of Latina students, e.g. for ESOL classes and bilingual education, must be addressed if they are to enjoy equal access to the college program.

3. The evidence presented here suggests that ***graduation matters.*** It is not the mere taking of courses that facilitates dramatic change in the women, but the experience of earning a degree, of walking down the aisle, of completion. As one graduate who now works in the Learning Center beamed, *"When I walked for graduation, I was walking more for the young ones behind me, than for me. They must see that the diploma is valuable and that they can achieve it."* For women whose lives have been characterized by incompletes and interruptions, earning a degree — Associate's, Bachelor's or Master's — is a significant accomplishment. Courses are growth producing; graduation is transformative.

4. As others have written before us, ***prisons are increasingly facilities for those who have mental health problems.*** At present, prisons and jails are sites in which disproportionate numbers of men and women with mental heath problems can be found.[73] Within BHCF, the percentages of women who are on the Office of Mental Health rolls is estimated to be approximately 50%. Seventy-five percent of these women are on psychotropic medication and in an analysis conducted in June of 1998, it was determined that 80% of the Unusual Incident reports involved women who were diagnosed as having mental health problems.[74] The day-to-day life within prisons supervised by staff who are not trained to deal with mental health problems is precarious for all. While it is the case that a college-in-prison — like any college — must be equipped to deal with issues of mental health and counseling, it is even truer that in the absence of college and other support programs, mental health problems are likely to worsen, as depression deepens and despair spreads.

5. The ***"drafting" of women from one facility to another, mid-semester, causes major disruptions for students and faculty.*** In the course of this three-year study, over 30% of the students were drafted[75] during their involvement in the college program. A number of teachers commented on the problems provoked when *"one of my best students has to leave the class because she is being drafted somewhere up North, eight hours from her kids in the Bronx!"* The negative impact of disrupted education is magnified in the prison context, creating adverse consequences for students and faculty.

6. The issue of ***parole*** emerged often through the research. As has been well documented nationally and in New York State, parole boards have, of recent, been far less likely to grant parole than under prior administrations.[76] In New York State, most inmates are denied parole at their first board hearing. Women are rightfully worried, and some officers concur, that *"having a college degree doesn't mean anything to the parole board."*

A community lawyer who fought hard for the restoration of college explains, *"At parole, these women and men are being retried on their original crime. The law is clear. The parole board is supposed evaluate inmates on the basis of what they have accomplished while in prison, not retry them on their crime."*

As one woman put it, *"My parole board is more likely to give me credit for my Certification in Money Addiction — because I dealt drugs — than my Master's in Forensic Psychology."*

Another echoed, *"The parole board — they see me as a crack addict or a murderer. I've been here 12 years, can't help my daughter from in here. I'm working for a college degree, but their personal biases take precedence over what we've accomplished. They throw cold water on your face and then you find yourself in a rut. You take courses, you try to complete your degree. If you don't go for college, they hold it against you. If you do go for college, they hold it against you. It feels like you're damned if you do, and damned if you don't."*

A critical, historic analysis of parole decisions in general and as they relate to higher education would be timely and could serve as a significant opportunity for public debate about alternatives to prison, length of prison sentences, parole and clemency. Many throughout New York State and the nation are beginning to ask, "When is the punishment over?" or "When is justice served?"

A recent proliferation of critical writings by political and religious leaders about the criminal justice system and parole raises questions about the impact of mass incarceration on poor communities of color, the importance of restorative justice and reconciliation, and the significance of an ethic of redemption.[77, 78]

7. Many have asked, "Does college work particularly well for women?" Put another way, ***"Does college have the same benefits for male inmates?"*** There is substantial evidence (see Appendix B for an annotated bibliography) documenting the positive impact of education, ranging from GED programs through vocational programs and college, on men and in male facilities.[79] Indeed, most research on prison-based education has been conducted within male facilities. Evidence from social scientists, testimony from educators who have worked in male and female facilities, and interviews with corrections officers who have moved between systems, confirm that education in prison is a gender neutral intervention. While college programs must always take into account the particular circumstances of the student body (gender, language, academic biography, strengths, needs, length of sentence, age, etc.), there is nothing to suggest that college is any more effective for women than for men in prison.

8. ***The relation between corrections officers and the college program needs to be explicitly addressed.*** When the College Bound program was first designed, there was much appropriate concern that corrections officers would be offended by the program. Community members worried that corrections officers might resent men and women in prison going to college for "free." With these concerns in mind, a number of programmatic features were instituted. First, as noted above, the college program is **not free** for inmates. Every student pays an average of one month's salary toward her tuition. Second, the Center for Redirection in Education awards an annual college scholarship to the child of a college student, the child of a corrections officer and the child of a victim. Third, there have been embryonic discussions about providing higher educational opportunities to corrections officers through similar consortium arrangements. While a few courses (e.g. the Sign Language course) have successfully been offered jointly to inmates and officers, the hope is that over time officers in this and other facilities will have access to an array of courses for their own personal and professional development. It should be noted, however, that counter to early concerns, the administrators and officers who were interviewed and those who work with the college program, have supported the program.

9. ***Do college programs in prisons need State funding?*** *Changing Minds* presents the results of a study of a very particular kind of college-in-prison program. This is the first post 1995 empirical documentation of college-in-prison. The focus of the study is on College Bound, a thoughtfully constructed model that is heavily reliant upon the good will of private colleges and universities and the generous donations of individuals and foundations from across the country. The program is strong and sustainable. Nevertheless, an all-volunteer program is always fragile. It seems clear from the BHCF program, and certainly from comparable programs now shut down or struggling across the nation, that some steady stream of state funding is necessary in order to create and sustain a viable college program. This is particularly so in communities which are less affluent or

enjoy less access to multiple colleges and universities than Westchester County. Some state legislators from across the country are considering giving grants to colleges interested in prison education or to prisons interested in recruiting college partners.

It seems unlikely, in the near future, that individual Pell grants (or the equivalent) will be available to individuals in prison. However, recent federal support for youthful offenders' pursuit of higher education suggests that the strict no-support-for-higher-education-in-prison policy of the past six years is taking a turn. To educate inmates across age and geography, government funded institutional grants offered at the equivalent of $2,500 per student would likely be sufficient to maintain a high quality college program in prison. To answer the question, then, college programs in prison do need State funding. The costs, however, given dramatic reductions in reincarceration rates, are relatively low.

10. ***Is it fair to educate prisoners?*** As researchers, we have been asked this question often, particularly by working class men and women who struggle to pay for their own, or their children's higher education. The present research can only assess whether our current policies insure and enable public safety, social justice and personal transformation.

The data presented here suggest that our present national policy of not providing higher education to men and women in prison is costly and dangerous. The decision to not educate produces negative consequences for women and men in prison, persons who work in prisons, the children of inmates and our communities. In addition, the evidence presented here demonstrates that a national policy which supports higher education for men and women in prison is cost effective, creates safer communities and prisons, and transforms the lives of prisoners, their children and, in all likelihood, the generation after that. Funding college-in-prison programs does not take money away from individual citizens, nor does it weaken any one person's chance of receiving federal support for college. Restoring prisoner access to Pell Grants would only allow prisoners an equal opportunity to apply for federal support.[80]

It has been most sobering for the research team to hear responses to our work from the parents of murdered children. These men and women offered eloquent endorsements of this research, quoted on the back of this report. To diverse audiences, including these victim advocates, the evidence for higher education in prison is indeed compelling. Providing college education in prison is smart and effective social policy.

# A NATIONAL MODEL: QUESTIONS OF REPLICABILITY

BHCF is nationally recognized as a maximum-security facility for women, rich in inmate-focused and inmate-initiated programs,[81] coordinated by a professional and proactive staff. The Superintendent is well established as a leader of vision, courage and integrity. Located in the wealthy hills of Westchester County, surrounded by elite homes, corporations, colleges and universities, it would be easy to see the College Program as an idiosyncratic success, a sign of local prosperity and charismatic leadership and therefore not replicable.

Indeed, while the BHCF College program has benefited from local wealth, generosity and organizing, most of the funds that support the program come from out-of-state contributions.[82] Most of the internal strength of the prison comes from the Superintendent, her staff and the inmates. The Superintendent believes in and practices a commitment to inmate and staff participation and leadership. The inmates and staff rise to the occasion. The resources of Westchester County accumulate inside the prison because the Superintendent, her staff and the women at BHCF are strong advocates for educational programs.

In this context, two policy questions emerge: First, what elements of this model of college-in-prison are generalizable? Second, can this model be replicated in other prisons and with other colleges?

To the question of generalizability, three sources of data are offered. First, our qualitative and quantitative databases triangulate to confirm the positive effects of college on the women, the prison environment, post-release outcomes and reincarceration rates. The findings reported here replicate and extend the existent literatures on the positive effects of higher education for poor and working-class women and men and the literature on prison-based education.[83]

Second, our design explicitly sought evidence that could disconfirm positive impact. The research team interviewed women who dropped out of the college program and women dissatisfied with the college program; corrections officers who work at a distance from the college program and those who work closely were interviewed. A focus group was conducted with the teen children who have witnessed much and paid an enormous price for their mothers' incarcerations. The impact of college was subjected to a quantitative analysis of reincarceration despite overwhelming evidence of prison as a revolving door.

*"This program produces the generation of excitement, of possibility and a sense of purpose. The College program has galvanized everyone! I would hope that this project remains in place long enough for knowledge of its existence and usefulness to reach backwoods places. Light a fire under all other universities!!!"*
Professor Oppenheimer

Third, when our research team has spoken with researchers, policymakers, corrections officers and prison activists from San Quentin, from women's prisons in New Zealand and inmates/officers/superintendents from other facilities and departments of corrections across the United States, there has been a strong positive response across these very diverse contexts. While at first many offer snide comments about the wealth of Westchester, as if suggesting that it must have been easy to pull this off in BHCF (easy would not be an appropriate adjective), ultimately people from these other communities understand that the key to the success of the model lies in: the active involvement and support of prison administrators, community members and University Presidents; a powerful inmate-centered community of programs, and a rigorous and creative inventory of community assets in all forms. The replicable and necessary elements for college-in-prison include active collaboration among prison administration, external community and local universities; strong student participation in shaping and sustaining the program, and serious documentation and recruitment of local community resources that can be brought to bear on the college-in-prison program.

To the question, "Can this program be replicated?" the research team would have to answer a qualified yes. Indeed, it would be foolish to deny that location matters. With BHCF located so near to New York City, surrounded by Westchester wealth and a plethora of colleges and universities, the task of attracting consortium members and local support was not initially difficult (although funds to sustain, rather than initiate the program, seem harder to come by). With sponsors such as Glenn Close, Eve Ensler, Ossie Davis, and Ruby Dee, the national name recognition of the BHCF College program was almost immediate.[84] With the generous support and courage of Marymount Manhattan College President Regina Peruggi and the Open Society Institute, the program was launched so that additional college involvement and foundation support were easier to come by, once the "firsts" were lined up. Nevertheless, the research team has been encouraged that other communities have different resources to bring to bear. We recommend that the Center for Redirection through Education pursue the establishment of and/or support for college programs in other facilities across the state, working with other community based organizations, prisons, inmate groups, colleges and universities. It is of particular importance to test the College Bound model in men's facilities and rural communities. At a session of College Presidents who participate in the Consortium, the former President of Pace University, Patricia Ewers, suggested a state wide strategy by which a map of New York State Criminal Justice facilities would be layered over a map of New York State Colleges and Universities, in an effort to encourage and sponsor "hubs" of college-prison collaborations across the State. Such a strategy seems important to pursue.

*"When I was nine, my mother first gave me a book by Frederick Douglass. I was fascinated to learn that people weren't allowed to read or write, and were beaten or killed if they got caught trying. For Douglass, literacy meant freedom from slavery. For me it means* ***freedom to live independently, to acquire skills, maintain a job that empowers and not dabble with a life of crime.*** *For women, college means the difference between having to go back to abusive relationships, substance abuse, boosting, hanging paper, picking pockets and a life of poverty and law breaking. The* ***revolving doors are wide open for those who leave the prison system, especially those with no skills or education.*** *Having left Bedford, now in a new prison without college, I sit here and look around, and I see clearly the toll of the disadvantage.*

*There are twelve women who reside in the dorm with me, my eyes circle the room and I gaze closely at them. Many of them were abused, drug addicts or living in poverty. I wonder exactly what brought them down this dismal road to meet at the same place and time. How did they get here?*

*In between my quiet thoughts, I hear in the background a loud roar of, 'ON – THE – COUNT!' I scurry to my feet, searching for my hot pink slippers. The officer looks around in silence, counts us. We are all here. Some of the women go back to television watching, others play cards, few opt to read or write. Few know how. Several of the women have never thought to do anything constructive with their lives. I struggle and wonder why? I myself desperately fight the feeling of a life without hope.* ***I know the best possible solution for successful reintegration into society is higher education.*** *In my mind, I am refusing to go back to a life where I assumed I have no choices. I look at these women and I feel anxious and afraid all at the same time."*

*A letter from Iris, serving 15 to life,*
*transferred to another facility midway*
*through her college program*

Because of the Workplace and Community Transition for Incarcerated Youth Offenders Grant, a new generation of college programs is beginning to sprout up in juvenile facilities and/or for juveniles in adult facilities. This may be a moment when various models of college-in-prison need to be developed in settings that include male prisoners, minimum and moderate security facilities with short-term sentences and younger inmates, and facilities located in more rural, working-class communities. The impact is clear, and the need is recognized, even by persons who have lost a loved one to murder.

The research team hopes this report opens up conversations about prison reform, college-in-prison and college post-prison in state legislatures; in colleges and universities; in State and Federal Departments of Education and Corrections, and most importantly in churches, beauty parlors, dentist offices, schools, mosques, synagogues, nail salons, bowling alleys and community based organizations throughout our nation.

While a dramatic shift in public dollars — from education to prisons — has occurred in the name of a War on Crime, the public has been neither well educated nor informed. The results presented here suggest that this shift has been costly in fiscal and human terms. The consequences have been most devastating in low income communities of color. Public investments in higher education before, during and after prison are powerfully effective in terms of economic, social, psychological and civic outcomes for us all.

# APPENDIX A

Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Inmate and Former Inmate Samples

| RACE/ETHNICITY | INTERVIEWS WITH INMATES N=65 | FOCUS GROUPS N=43 | INTERVIEWS WITH FORMER INMATES N=20 | (RAW TOTALS) & PERCENTAGE OF FULL SAMPLE | PERCENTAGE OF BHCF GENERAL POPULATION** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AFRICAN AMERICAN/ CARIBBEAN | 30 | 23 | 11 | (64) 52.5% | 55.0% |
| LATINA | 10 | 14 | 5 | (29) 23.8% | 22.8% |
| WHITE | 8 | 6 | 3 | (17) 14.0% | 21.5% |
| OTHER | 2 | 0 | 1 | (3) 2.5% | 0.7% |
| UNKNOWN | 9 | 0 | 0 | (9) 7.4% | NA |
| TOTALS | 59* | 43 | 20 | (122) 100.0% | 100.0% |

* There were a total of 65 inmates interviewed individually and 43 in a focus group. Six inmates were interviewed more than one time with a different set of questions individually and a number were in more than one focus group.

** NYSDOCS Quarterly HUB Profiles of Inmates, Bedford Hills Under Custody 01APR00.

# APPENDIX B

**A Selected Bibliography on Post-Secondary Education and Reduction in Recidivism***
Compiled by Annette Johnson (2001) for the Balancing Justice Task Force on Correctional Education, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State.

**For an Overview, see "Education as Crime Prevention: Providing Education to Prisoners," September 1997, Research Brief, Center on Crime Communities & Culture**
http://www.soros.org/crime/research_brief__2.html

"This research brief presents the most recent data on the impact of education on crime and crime prevention, and examines the debate on providing higher education to inmates." This is an excellent introductory article that provides information on educational levels of adult and juveniles offenders, summarizes the literature on the positive impact of educational attainment in prison on recidivism, postulates dollars savings for New York State, and contains footnotes and bibliography for further reference."

**Individual Studies**

**1. Fine, M., Torre, M.E., Boudin, K., Bowen, I., Clark, J., Hylton, D., Martinez, M., Missy, Roberts, R.A., Smart, P., & Upegui, D. "Changing Minds: The Impact of College in a Maximum-Security Prison," September, 2001. New York: The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York.**
http://www.changingminds.ws

Collaborative research by university and inmate researchers. Using the standard New York State Department of Correctional Services measure of 36 months post-release, women who participated in college while in prison had a 7.7% return to custody rate, compared to all female offenders released between 1985 and 1995, who had a 29.9% return to custody rate.

Quantitative and qualitative methods demonstrate that college-in-prison transforms lives; positively impacts inmates' children; creates more "positively managed" prisons with fewer disciplinary incidents; creates safer communities; and through reduced recidivism rates, reduces the need for tax dollars to be spent on prisons.

**2. "Division of Continuing Education Post-Secondary Programs Executive Summary," January 2000, Windham School District, Texas Department of Criminal Justice**

Noting studies in Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Alabama, Wisconsin and New York that showed a clear and fairly consistent correlation between completion of collegiate studies and reduction in recidivism, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice reviewed post-release data for 883 offenders who received college degrees while incarcerated between 1986 and 1992. Compared to a system-wide recidivism rate of 43%, prisoners who completed an Associate's Degree recidivated at the rate of 27% and those who completed a Baccalaureate Degree recidivated at the rate of 7.8%.

**3. "Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Recidivism," August 2000, Tony Fabelo, Ph.D., Executive Director, Criminal Justice Policy Council**
http://www.cjpc.state.tx.us/wsdrec10.pdf

The Criminal Justice Policy Council evaluated the performance of the Texas prison educational system — the Windham School District — analyzing the impact of educational achievement of inmates on recidivism. The study collected data for 25,000 inmates released between Sept. 1996 and May 1998, controlling for factors such as age and type of offense, post-release employment and earnings.

Among the conclusions: educational achievement in prisons is associated with lower recidivism rates, regardless of inmates' characteristics. The higher the level of education attained, the lower the recidivism rates.

Acquiring a vocational certificate did not have a significant impact on recidivism. The apparent non-impact of vocational certification on recidivism may reflect the fact that only 21% of inmates who earned a certificate obtained employment in their field of training.

**4. "Return on Investment for Correctional Education in Florida" (based on a Study Conducted by TaxWatch and the Center for Needs Assessment & Planning), June 1999, Florida Department of Corrections, Bureau of Research and Data Analysis**
http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/taxwatch/index.html

Using the Costs Consequences Analysis model developed by Florida Tax Watch (FTW) (a neutral 'government-watchdog agency') and the Florida State University Center for Needs Assessment & Planning (CNAP), adapted by the Florida Department of Corrections (DC), FTW and CNAP examined DC educational programs to study returns on public investment in job training and education programs conducted by the DC.

Among the study results: all sub groups of Correctional Education completers for FY 1993-94 had positive returns on investment ratios. The highest return was for "Academic" completers, with $3.53 returned per $1.00 of public investment.

Additional information regarding the study and Cost-Consequences Analysis appears in two articles: 1) Kaufman, R., Watkins, R. & Sims, L. Crispo, N., Hall, J., Sprague, D. (1997). Cost-Consequences Analysis: A case study. Performance Improvement Quarterly. Vol. 10, No. 2; and 2)Muir, M., Watkins, R., Kaufman, R., and Leigh, D. (1998). Costs-Consequences Analysis: A primer. Performance Improvement, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp.8-17, both of which can be accessed at http://onap.fsu.edu/onap/download/pubs/

**5. Davis, Dr. H.C., "Correctional Education: Success and Hope," Correctional Education Association News and Notes, October 1999**

Data collected at the Eddie Warrior Correctional Center, Taft, OK, reports reduction of recidivism to 8% for inmates who participated in college courses in prison and to 3% for inmates who earned a college degree in prison.

The costs in the state of Oklahoma were $1,500 per year for post secondary students. The study notes: "If you take one person that does not come back for a second time you have created a savings to the state of approximately $225,000 over the rest of their life span."

**6. Duguid, Stephen and Ray Pawson, "Education, Change, and Transformation: The Prison Experience," Evaluation Review, August 1998**

This study explores the transformative capacity of education in the context of a follow-up study of 654 Canadian former federal prisoners who had been part of a liberal arts university prison education program, separately examining a group whose academic performance improved, a group of whose academic performance was consistently high and who were active in program affairs, and a group who were high school dropouts from broken homes. After release, 75% of the prisoners remained free of reincarceration for at least 3 years.

**7. "Reflections from a life behind bars: Build colleges, not prisons," James Gilligan, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Oct. 16, 1998**
http://www.chronicle.com

Reporting on a Massachusetts recidivism study, the author, a psychiatrist and former director of mental health for the Massachusetts prison system, reports: "While several programs had worked, the most successful of all, and the only one that had been 100 per cent effective in preventing recidivism, was the program that allowed inmates to receive a college degree while in prison. Several hundred prisoners in Massachusetts had completed at least a bachelor's degree while in prison over a 25-year period, and not one of them had been returned to prison for a new crime."

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**8. Stevens, Dennis J. and Charles S. Ward, "College Education and Recidivism: Educating Criminals Meritorious," Journal of Correctional Education. Vol. 48, Issue 3, September 1997, pp. 106-111**

This paper reports on a number of educational programs with recidivism defined as the re-incarceration for a criminal offense (other than a technical violation of parole) with the following results:

Alabama: The general prison population recidivism rate in any given 12 month period averages 35% as compared to 1% for inmates who completed post-secondary degrees in prison.

Maryland: 46% of inmates released from the general prison population of 19,014 inmates were returned to prison within three years of their release as compared to none of the 120 inmates who had received degrees while in prison.

New York: 26% of the inmates who earned a college degree while incarcerated were returned to prison compared with 45% of New York's general prison population.

Texas: Of the 60 men and women who had earned degrees and were released, 10% returned to prison. Generally, the recidivism rate of inmates in Texas is 36%. The state projects a $6.6 million savings for every one percent reduction in recidivism.

**9. Batiuk, Mary Ellen, "The State of Post-Secondary Education in Ohio," Journal of Correctional Education, Vol. 48. Issue 2, June 1997, pp 70-72**

While the overall recidivism rate was 40%, the recidivism rate for those who completed the Associate Degree program was 18%.

The Dept. of Rehabilitation and Correction announced plans to fund 2623 inmate college students, based on a formula where 10% of the population of minimum security institutions, 8% of the population in medium institutions, and 4% of the population at close-security institutions will be eligible for post-secondary classes.

**10. Duguid, Stephen, "Cognitive Dissidents Bite the Dust - The Demise of University Education in Canada's Prisons," Journal of Correctional Education, Vol. 48, issue 2, June 1997, pp. 56-68**

The researchers followed up the post-release lives of 654 federal inmates who had completed at least two university courses while incarcerated during the period 1973-1993, separately examining prisoner-students by risk scores on a recidivism prediction system (SIR), which uses indicators such as type of offense, number of offenses, age at first arrest, and marital status.

Both as a group (only 25% of the 654 subjects recidivated in the three years following their release - a 50% reduction compared to the Canadian recidivism rate) and in separate SIR-controlled sub-groups, prisoners who completed college courses experienced reduction in recidivism, from 46% reduction for those at high risk of recidivism, to 23% reduction for those identified at low risk of recidivism.

**11. Batiuk, M. E., P. Moke. P. W. Rounree, "Crime and Rehabilitation: Correctional Education as an Agent of Change-A Research Note," Justice Quarterly, Vol. 14, No. 1, March 1997**

The authors report a 58% reduction in expected recidivism for 95 inmates who completed an Associate's degree while in medium security prisons compared to 223 randomly selected inmates,including some completing less than 3 months of college, some high school graduates, and some high school dropouts. The authors conclude college education reduces the likelihood of recidivism, but this effect works principally through post-release employment. That is, college education increases the likelihood of post-release employment, which in turn reduces the risk of recidivism

**12. Waldon, Alton R. Jr., "Unhealthy Choice: Prisons Over Schools in New York State," A Report from the office of NY State Senator Alton R. Waldon. Jr., April 1996**

Society gains an estimated $500,000 in tax revenue and avoided social costs for every child who is saved from becoming a criminal justice statistic.

**13. Fowles, Richard (University of Utah) and Matt Christensen (Datametrics Incorporated), "A Statistical Analysis of Project Horizon: The Utah Corrections Education Recidivism Reduction Plan," December 1995**
http://www.econ.utah.edu/fowles/index.html

This study, which is part of a larger, ongoing study of the cost-effectiveness of prisoner education in Utah, analyzes recidivism rates for 231 Utah prisoners who participated in Project Horizon, a comprehensive education and training program, compared to a statistically matched control group of 3022 prisoners released from January 1993 to September 1995. Project Horizon participant recidivism rates are significantly lower than non-Horizon rates.

Anticipated long term recidivism rates for non-Horizon participants range from 71% to 90%. Corresponding recidivism rates for Horizon participants range from 61% to 72%. The point estimate for non-Horizon participants is 82%, for Horizon participants, it is 65%, which represents a 20% reduction in recidivism. These values are in accord with previous studies, both locally and nationally.

Because incarceration costs are large relative to education costs, even minimal reductions in recidivism have the potential for large economic savings. "As such the program appears to deliver a net benefit to the State of Utah."

**14. Prison Education Program Participation and Recidivism: A Test of the Normalization Hypothesis, May 1995, Miles D. Harer, Research Analyst, Federal Bureau of Prisons**
http://www.bop.gov/orepg/edrepabs.html

Using multivariate models to predict recidivism and the propensity score approach, the author tests the hypothesis "that inmates who actively participate in education programs have lower likelihoods of recidivating, defined as rearrest or parole revocation within 3 years after release, controlling for several background and post-release measures, including post-release employment. Results show that inmates who actively participate in education programs have significantly lower likelihoods of recidivating." This effect is independent of post-release employment. Because of this, the author concludes that education has a "normalizing" effect on prisoners, by reducing prisonization and by helping prisoners to appreciate and adopt prosocial norms.

**15. "Recidivism Among Federal Prisoners Released in 1987," Miles D. Harer, Federal Bureau Of Prisons, Office of Research & Evaluation, 1994.**

Recidivism rates were inversely related to educational program participation while in prison. The more educational programs successfully completed for each 6 months confined, the lower the recidivism rate.

**16. Batiuk, M. E. and P.Moke, "Education in Ohio Prisons: An Analysis of Recidivism Rates ", An unpublished research paper.**

Race, youth, number of prior convictions and property offenses are all significantly related to higher rates of recidivism. The authors show how these high risk factors relate to recidivism in general and specifically by educational programs.

Among the study's findings: For black property offenders with prior convictions, college programs reduced recidivism dramatically. College programs reduced recidivism in each of the high-risk categories and low-risk categories examined.

Three conclusions arise: (1) all correctional educational programs reduce recidivism rates; (2) the more education offenders receive, the lower their recidivism rates are; and (3) post-secondary correctional education programs reduce recidivism the most.

**17. "The Impact of Correctional Education On Recidivism 1988- 1994," Office of Correctional Education, U.S Dept. of Education**

This report contains summaries of diverse programs, including the following:

Texas: 1994 State of Texas report (Tracy and Johnson, Windham School System) found that the recidivism rate for those who received a GED certificate and completed a vocational trade was more than 20% lower than for those who did not reach either milestone. The report also showed that two years after release, the overall recidivism rate for college degree holders was a low 12%, and inversely differentiated by type of degree: Associate: 3.7%; Baccalaureate: 5.6%; Masters: 0%.

**18. Lawyer, Heidi L., and Thomas D. Dertinger, "Back to School or Back to Jail," ABA Criminal Justice, Winter 1993, p. 21**

A 1983 study at Folsom Prison in California showed that none of the prisoners there who earned Bachelor's degrees recidivated, compared to the three-year 55% recidivism rate of the rest of the prisoners released.

**19. Taylor, Jon M., "Post Secondary Correctional Education: An Evaluation of Effectiveness and Efficiency " Journal of Correctional Education, Vol. 43, Issue 3, Sept. 1992, pp. 132-141**

Bureau of Justice Statistics (1987) reports that in two studies those offenders with at least some college education recidivated at the rate of 30.4% and 31%, while respectively, high school dropouts from the same sample recidivated at rates of 40.9% and 51%.

New Jersey: In 1974, Thomas reported in an in-house study that the Burlington County College of New Jersey prison program experienced a recidivism rate of 10% compared to an overall national recidivism rate of 80%.

Canada: Duguid (1981), reporting on an objective analysis of the University of Victoria's prison college program noted: "the rate of recidivism for the students is 14% compared to 52% of the matched group of non-student prisoners."

California: Chase and Dickover (1983) reporting on the evaluation of the Folsom Prison college program revealed a zero percent recidivism rate for the released participants over one year, while the average recidivism rate for the state's parolees was 23.9% for the first year, increasing to 55% within three years

New Mexico: Psychology Today (1983) reported "the rate of recidivism among inmates who took college classes at New Mexico State Penitentiary between 1967 and 1977 averaged 15.5%, while the general population averaged 68% recidivism.

**20. Clark, Chester H., Asst. Commissioner, "Analysis of Return Rates of the Inmate College Program Participants," New York State Dept. of Correctional Services, August, 1991**

Inmate College Program participants in 1986-1987 who had earned a college degree while incarcerated were found to return to prison at a significantly lower rate than participants who did not earn a degree. Of those earning a degree, 26.4% had been returned to the Department's custody by Feb 28. 1991, whereas 44.6% of those lower rate than would be expected when compared to the overall male return rate.

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[21]This research was generously funded by the Leslie Glass Foundation and the Spencer Foundation. Production and distribution of the report was supported by the Open Society Institute and the Glass Foundation. The project was housed at the Center for Human Environments at the Graduate Center.


[22]This report documents the findings of research conducted from 1997 through 2000 at the BHCF in Bedford Hills, New York. Permission was granted from the New York State Department of Correctional Services, Superintendent Elaine Lord and all of the participating women, teachers and corrections officers willing to be involved in the research.

[23]The Workplace and Community Transition for Incarcerated Youth Offenders Grant provides federal funding to state correctional education agencies. The purpose of the grant program is to "assist and encourage incarcerated youths to acquire functional literacy and life and job skills through the pursuit of a post-secondary education certificate, or an associate or arts or bachelor's degree while in prison." In addition, eligible correctional education programs should provide "employment counseling and other related services which start during incarceration and continue through prerelease and while on parole."

State correctional education agencies applying for funding of post-secondary education programs must provide services to "youth offenders" who are 25 years of age or younger.


[24]This research could not have taken place without the explicit support of the State Department of Correctional Services in Albany and the Superintendent of the facility, Elaine Lord. The research team appreciates the generosity of both. The Superintendent, in particular, was personally involved in every aspect of the research process, personally checking names and numbers of all records entered into the quantitative study of re-incarceration. The staff at BHCF have been professional and collaborative throughout. The New York State Department of Correctional Services has a wealth of information available on its facilities, prison populations, etc. The research team appreciates, in particular, the assistance of Program Research Specialist III E. Michele Staley.

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[25]Staley, E.M. (2001). New York State Department of Correctional Services. For the purposes of this report, the phrases reincarceration and return-to-custody are used interchangeably to mean any return to a correctional facility.

[26]Throughout this report we have used "women in prison," "inmates," "prisoners" and "students" interchangeably because the research team members from BHCF differed on preferences for "inmates" versus "prisoners." To capture the fullness of the lives of the women who participated in the research, who when in college feel and describe themselves as "students," our preference was to refer to them as "women in prison" or "students."

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[31]See Correctional Association of New York. Prisoner Profile 2/2001; Survey of State Prison Inmates 1991; Surveys of State and Federal Inmates 1997.

[32]See New York State Department of Correctional Services. (1996). Women Under Custody, April 1, 1996; and College Bound Programs. (1997). Bedford Hills, NY: Center for Redirection Through Education.

[33]The first formal commitment to educating the incarcerated in the United States was stated in the Declaration of Principles of the American Correctional Association Congress in Cincinnati Ohio, in 1870 (Ryan, 1994). It was not until 100 years later — in 1970 that federal support for educational programs began to appear in prisons. Adult Basic Education (ABE) was the result of one of the first large-scale educational programs, supported by the U.S. Office of Education, which by 1975 was present in 45 states. Similarly, General Educational Development (GED) high school equivalency programs and vocational training for men and women in prison flourished in the 1970s as the philosophical attitudes in corrections moved from a model of penance to one of "rehabilitation" (Ryan, 1976). In 1965, Title IV of the Higher Education Act was passed by Congress that explicitly stated that inmates were eligible for financial aid to attend college in the form of Pell Grants. This resulted in a growth of college courses and programs available in prisons, and by 1990, 350 programs existed across 90% of the states (Taylor, 1993). Yet, in 1986 the Federal Bureau of Prisons set the current standard for mandatory education at the eighth-grade achievement level. This is the standard upheld at Bedford Hills, whereby inmates must attend ABE and pre-GED classes in place of some regular work hours and all other education coursework (GED, pre-college and college classes) must be taken in addition to a full work schedule.

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[39]E. Lord (personal communication, September 21, 2000).

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[45]Iris Bowen was transferred to Albion Correctional Facility midway through the study. Though more than 500 miles away from the support of her family and friends, she remained an active contributor to the research.

[46]Aisha Elliot contributed to the theoretical design of the research and is no longer an active member of the research team.

[47]Migdalia Martinez was granted clemency in December 2000 and released, after serving 11 years, 3 months, on January 31, 2001.

[48]In 1999, 20 faculty of the College, including both teachers and tutors, were interviewed as a full group to document their experiences of teaching at the prison and to assess their sense of the impact of prison on the women and the college environment. In the Spring of 2000, the full faculty (N=30) were sent a survey, with questions that followed up from the focus group, asking about experiences teaching, rating of students' motivation, responsibility, discipline problems, commitment, etc. Thirteen responded yielding a 33% response rate. As faculty and tutors working within a prison environment, there was enormous variety within the sample. Most work at private universities, many of which are quite elite; only a few are employed by public universities, and these faculty represent themselves, not their institutions. Two faculty members are introduced here so that readers appreciate the range of experiences and expectations they bring to the task of teaching in prison.

Professor Criss tells us, "I teach full time at a College of Criminal Justice which puts me in this very interesting position of, during the day, teaching those who want to be future cops and in corrections, and then at night, I go to prison and work with the inmates."

Professor Everhart, from a private institution, speaks of her erroneous preconceptions, "This course is unique because... there really hasn't been a science course in this college. This is science for non-majors, just the word science sends chills down most of the students' spines. The first night, giving out the syllabus, sent a lot of them flying out of the room. But I did run the course as true to the syllabus and true to higher standards as I possibly could. I did offer the students a choice in their exams, of either short answers or essays. And of all of them, only one continually chose the essays. So I was quite surprised when I got assignments back from them that were so well written. I thought that they had chosen the short answers because they had problems with the English language. When I read what they wrote, I was speechless... Based on what I received, I would say that they would have done better with a grade had they chosen the essays... even the guards notice their enthusiasm... [This was a science course, in which we worked on dissection, so] I did bring in plastic spoons to use as the probes. And pins... I got permission to do that. The magic markers, we got in trouble bringing in. But the tea pins were easy, figure that one!"

[49]Staley, conducted the analyses for the project, relying upon the following methodology:

[NYSDOCS] matched the file [of college students from the Mercy College registrar's office] with our department's release file that included releases between 1985 and 1999, using DIN... [I]ncluded in the analysis were only the inmates that were released from NYSDOCS' custody subsequent to their participation in the college program. Of the 454 cases provided, 297 college participants have been released from NYSDOCS since their college participation. This is the sample that was used in the follow up analysis to determine how many of these participants returned to NYSDOCS' custody. With respect to the return-to-custody analysis, I used the same survival analysis methodology that is used to prepare our department's standard return-to-custody report (e.g. "1995 Releases: Three Year Post Release Follow Up." [E.M. Staley, personal correspondence, August 22, 2000]).

[50]Jacobson's calculations were based on two assumptions: 1. There are no (or very little) differences in the resources allocated to those students who are in college or pre-college classes. 2. The per student costs are based only on those completing the courses not on the numbers initially enrolled. Therefore based on the total number of students in 2000 who completed courses (265 college and 60 pre-college), a total of 325, the average cost per student in 2000 was $1,465 based on actual expenditures ($476 thousand). If the budgeted amount ($501.5 thousand) as opposed to the actual is used the average per student number increases slightly to $1,543. The incremental costs for expansion within Bedford Hills would require relatively minimal funding so that the marginal costs for the new students would be far lower than the average. For instance if the number of total students increased by 100, the following increases would have to be appropriated:

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 instructors @ $2,000 each | $10,000 |
| textbooks and materials | 5,000 |
| increased administrative support | 7,000 |
| increased advertising | 1,000 |
| miscellaneous | 3,000 |
| TOTAL | $26,000 |

The per-student cost for a marginal increase of 100 would be only $260 per student since so many of the Center's costs are fixed. The average per-student cost with this marginal increase of 100 would be $1,241 assuming a total budget of $527 thousand.

If the Center for Redirection through Education decided to expand by 100 students in another facility, the above incremental costs would still apply and in addition it would probably need to have an additional administrative staff person. Assuming a salary and benefits cost of $40,000, the total incremental cost for 100 students in a new facility would be $66,000 or $660 dollars per student. This would bring the total per-student cost to $1,334 assuming a total budget $567 thousand. Having this additional administrative person would allow for greater expansion both within the new facility and, perhaps, in other proximate facilities as well.

If the Center did both expansions (within Bedford Hills and another facility) then the total new costs would be $92,000 ($26,000 x 2= $52,000 + $40,000 + $92,000). It might actually be slightly less than this since the $7,000 allocated for administrative support in Bedford Hills would not necessarily have to be duplicated at a new facility given the addition of a full time staff person. The per-student cost for the additional 200 students would be $460 bringing the total per-student cost for 525 students to $1,130.

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[43]A more recent calculation of cost per student was conducted by Michael Jacobson, see endnote 45. Jacobson's analysis not only estimates current costs per students but also extrapolates the costs of a volunteer-only program if expanded in terms of size of student body and number of facilities included in the college program. In our estimates of the "costs" of educating a student in prison, we have relied upon the earlier estimate which is slightly more expensive, thus rendering a more conservative estimate of tax savings with the provision of college-in-prison.

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[78]A statement released in June 2001 by religious leaders in Westchester County, New York, takes the position that "As people of faith, part of one human family, we are called to speak the truth in love, to point out the failings of the present criminal justice system, to identify injustice and to envision a system of justice that is consistent with the central tenets of our faith, for everyone... We do not confuse forgiveness of the offender with acceptance of the crime. Our faith teaches us that offenders can have a change of heart and calls us to forgive the repentant. Those on whom the burden of forgiveness weighs the heaviest are the victims of crime. So our system must provide a meaningful role for the victims of crime so they can find healing, and ultimately, the ability to forgive." Collective statement by Marian Bohen, Rev. Barbara Brechi, Cordon Brown, Nicole Crifo, Marian Farrell, Rev. Nathaniel Grady, Hans Hallundback, Rev. William Mizell, Thomas Penney, Mati Scanlon, Robert Steed, Rachel Thompson, Katherine Vockins, and Prison Communities International.

[79]Johnson, A. (2001). A Selected Bibliography on Post-Secondary Education and Reduction in Recidivism. The League of Women Voters of New York State: Balancing Justice Task Force on Correctional Education.

[80]As of the 2000-2001 New York State budget, TAP grants are available to every academically qualified New York State Resident with a family income of less than $80,000, providing up to $5,000 over a four year period for full time students. (See http://assembly.state.ny.us/Reports/WAM/2001ABudg/31.html.) Allowing prisoners to apply for these needs-based (and therefore non-competitive) grants would not take money away from any other students.

[81]Examples of inmate-initiated programs at BHCF stretch as far back as the 1970s with the creation of the Children's Center, the Family violence Program in the mid-1980s and the nationally recognized AIDS Counseling and Education Program (ACE) in 1998.

[9]Zickefoos, S. (Personal communication, November 14, 2000.)

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[11]Other performers who have generously donated their talent for College Bound Program benefits are: Mary Alice, Paula Allan, Dame Zoe Caldwell, Camille O. Cosby, Hazelle Goodman, Mary Beth Hurt, Rosie Perez, Phylicia Rashaad, Pete Seeger, Willa Shalit, Gene Shalit, Phoebe Snow, Gary Sunshine, Marissa Tomei, Ulali and Vanessa Williams, and Joanne Woodward.

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**Kathy Boudin** has been incarcerated since 1981 and was eligible for parole in August 2001. Having earned her MA while at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, she is currently pursuing doctoral studies through Teachers College and she is a Leslie Glass Fellow. She has been published in the Harvard Education Review, Women and Therapy and American Corrections Association publications. Her poetry has appeared in various books and journals including Aliens at the Border, and she is a co-author of Breaking the Walls of Silence: Women and AIDS in a Maximum-Security Prison.

**Iris Bowen** is a poet, mother, tutor and mentor at the Albion Correctional Facility where she is finishing her sentence after being moved from the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility where she earned her associate's degree in sociology from Marymount Manhattan College. At Bedford she was a member of the Inmate Advisory Committee and an assistant for the College Bound program. She has been published in The International Journal of Critical Psychology.

**Judith Clark** has been serving a life sentence since 1981. She earned her MA while at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, is currently pursuing doctoral studies through Teachers College and is a Leslie Glass Fellow. She is a peer-facilitator in the parenting center at Bedford and has published in the Prison Journal and Zero to Three. Her poetry has appeared in The New Yorker and Global City Review. She is a co-author of Breaking the Walls of Silence: Women and AIDS in a Maximum-Security Prison.

**Donna Hylton** is currently pursuing her Master's in Fine Arts in creative writing through Sarah Lawrence College, after earning her BA from Mercy College while serving time at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. She is a member of the Inmate Advisory Committee for the College Bound program and has been published in The International Journal of Critical Psychology.

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**Migdalia Martínez** was granted clemency in December 2000 and released from Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, after serving 11 years and 3 months, on January 31, 2001. She began her college career while at Bedford and earned her BA from Marymount Manhattan College the semester after her release. At Bedford, she was the founder of Latinas Organizadas Viviendo Encarceladas (LOVE), an organization dedicated to the needs of the Latina inmate community, and co-founder of the College Bound program. Currently she is working as a harm reduction coordinator at a methadone clinic, is a public speaker on behalf of incarcerated women and has been published in The International Journal of Critical Psychology.

**'Missy'** is a mentor, member of the Inmate Advisory Committee and assistant for the College Bound program at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, where she earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from Marymount Manhattan College. She has been published in The International Journal of Critical Psychology.

**Rosemarie A. Roberts** is a Ph.D. candidate in Social /Personality Psychology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and a Leslie Glass Fellow. She is a recipient of numerous awards including National Science Foundation Fellowship and American Psychological Association Minority Fellowship. She teaches psychology, critical race theory, qualitative research methods and Afro-Caribbean dance. Her dissertation research focuses on the practice of critical consciousness through African-derived Black dance. She has been published in journals including Feminism and Psychology, Anthropology and Education Quarterly and Critical Theory and Practice, and has contributed chapters to a number of edited volumes including Speedbumps (Weis and Fine), The Unknown City (Fine and Weis), and Myths about the Powerless: Contesting Social Inequalities (Lykes, Banuzzi, Liem, and Morris).

**Pamela Smart** has a Master's Degree in the Science of Law from the University of Southern California for Professional Studies and a Master's of Arts from Mercy College. She has been published in The International Journal of Critical Psychology. She has been incarcerated since 1990, and is serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. She works as a tutor and teacher for the GED and pre-college programs at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility.

**Debora Upegui**, is a doctoral student in Social /Personality Psychology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and a Leslie Glass Fellow. Her research focuses on the relationship between language and identity, bilingual education, socio-political conflicts and displaced peoples, and has been published in The International Journal of Critical Psychology.

# Endorsements

*"The high rate of incarceration in the United States is one of our society's greatest failures. Offering higher education to those imprisoned opens the door to the possibility of a productive future and, ultimately, makes ours a more just and democratic nation."*

George Soros
Chairman, Open Society Institute

*"Educating the incarcerated is not an exercise in futility, nor is it a gift to the undeserving. It is a practical and necessary safeguard to insure that those who have found themselves without the proper resources to succeed have these needs met before they are released. It is a gift to ourselves and to our children, a gift of both compassion and peace of mind. We are not turning the other cheek to those who have hurt us. We are taking their hands and filling them with learning so that they can't strike us again."*

Janice Grieshaber
Executive Director, The Jenna
Foundation for Non-Violence

*"Given the relatively small baseline of funding for the College Bound program, the 'bang for the buck' in terms of the dramatic post-release outcomes is quite significant."*

Michael Jacobson
Professor, John Jay College
of Criminal Justice
Former Commissioner of the NYC
Department of Corrections

*"It's our responsibility as leaders of higher education institutions to ensure that access to education is within everyone's reach. My experience with the College Bound Program that provides baccalaureate level education opportunities to the women in Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, confirms my belief not only in the power of education to change lives, but also in the power that can be brought to bear when diverse education institutions come together to do something they know is essential, important and right!"*

Regina S. Peruggi
President, Central Park Conservatory
Former President, Marymount
Manhattan College

*"As the parent of a murdered son, I would not have seen myself advocating for the prison community, until I studied this reasonable idea, of positive societal behavior to be accomplished by education. I have seen it work and I believe in it. Changing Minds? It happens!"*

Ralph H. Hubbard
Victim Advocate

*"This important and welcomed study of college in prison gives us a new perspective on the ramifications of education and democracy. The foundation of our democracy is a belief in the ability of diversity to strengthen our unity. We must understand and accept the rights of individuals, groups, and their potential to contribute to the larger community and the nation. Understanding and acceptance, in turn, require knowledge and knowledge requires knowing not only other people's history but also our heritage and what makes a nation."*

Vartan Gregorian
President, Carnegie Corporation
of New York

*"Having had 2 children and a brother murdered, I have several reasons to be concerned about justice and the correctional system. While I certainly believe people must be appropriately punished for their crimes, there is no rehabilitation without education. Higher education for inmates will never bring my children or my brother back, but hopefully it will prevent further violence."*

Allen Mohammed
Father of two children lost
to violent crime

*"Crime ravages the human. Education empowers the soul."*

Camille O. Cosby, Ed.D

*"Clearly education is one really powerful means of preparing inmates for a responsible return to society... Through my work at Sing-Sing, I have experienced how powerful a factor colleges have been in maintaining the peace and well being of the prison."*

George W. Webber
Professor of Urban Ministry
President Emeritus, New York
Theological Seminary

*"From a business perspective, higher education in prison is a good investment! The ex-offender gains the knowledge, attitudes and skills to earn a decent living upon release. Society benefits from the productivity of a taxpaying citizen and significantly reduced crime and reincarceration rates."*

Gerard A. McCallion
President, S.B. Cantor Co., Inc.
Investment Bankers

*"Changing Minds leaves no doubt that an investment in higher education is the most effective way to reduce reincarceration rates, reduce crime, and lessen the taxpayers burdens. This is a must read for professionals and citizens alike — for everyone who wants to see the dead end spiral of the so-called corrections industry reversed."*

Augusta Kappner
President, Bank Street College

*"Women enter prison from among the most marginalized sectors in our society. Usually poor women of color, they are survivors of adult violence as well as childhood physical and sexual abuse, and experience much higher rates of mental illness, AIDs, and other illness than the general population. Changing Minds demonstrates that despite these incredible disadvantages, when presented with a genuine opportunity to learn, these same women can and will reinvent their own lives, spirits, and futures. And it is not only their own futures that are at stake: 75% of women in New York State are mothers of over 6000 children. The positive generational impact of higher education in prison is nothing less than staggering. Simply put: everybody wins."*

Julie F. Kowitz
Chair, Coalition for
Women Prisoners
Director, Women in Prison Project

*"Changing Minds serves to confirm the truth of the adage that 'the right thing to do is also the smart thing to do.' Education for inmates is reformative for the individual students and at the same time utilitarian for society and economically prudent. The report is both impressive and compelling."*

Roger Bowen
President and Professor of
Political Science at The University
of New Paltz

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